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Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

JANUARY 2002

America @work



ALSO INSIDE:

**The Fight for
Fair Trade**

**Hard Choices in
Health Care
Bargaining**

**Ladders to
Success**



**America's Workers
Heroes Every Day**

AFL-CIO CONVENTION • 2001



"I WOULD VERY much like to thank...the AFL-CIO for your support on behalf of CWA Local 14177, based out of New Era Cap....New Era did not want this union [in 1997] and they have been trying to get rid of it ever since. Thanks to a lot of hard work, pride and spirit, we have taken a stand for a fair and decent livable wage.... If not for the absolute strength and unity that the AFL-CIO has always offered to millions of hard-working folks, our road certainly would be questionable. I have always been proud of the fact that I have been a part of the AFL-CIO...."—Christine Wattie, CWA Local 14177, Buffalo, N.Y.

SAY WHAT?

What are your union's organizing and political action goals for the coming year?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

ABOUT HOW BEING PART OF A UNION CITY HAS BOOSTED YOUR UNION'S ORGANIZING, BARGAINING OR POLITICAL ACTION:

"FOLLOWING THE UNION CITIES

strategy has allowed us to maximize our small size, just 12,000 members, in a staunch right-to-work state. A couple of years ago, we passed a living wage ordinance, and just two weeks ago, Pima County approved a paid holiday for César Chávez's birthday."—Ian Robertson, president, Southern Arizona Central Labor Council, Tucson, Ariz.

"THE DISCUSSION OF immigrants [at the AFL-CIO Convention] made an impression on me. I'm glad the union movement is taking a more assertive stance on the rights of immigrant workers."—Steve Hunter, secretary-treasurer, Minnesota AFL-CIO

"AFTER VIEWING THE recent congressional hearings, I watched with great disgust as various representatives from Enron, the SEC and Arthur Andersen attempted to explain the collapse. Richard Trumka's testimony was tremendous, truthful and I sincerely hope that Congress and the White House pay very close attention to Mr. Trumka's comments. The criminals responsible for the loss of savings, 401ks and employment must not be allowed to escape prosecution."—Ryan Means, New York, N.Y.

"GE HAS A blatant lack of independent directors—63 percent of the full board is not independent....Is it any wonder that these directors do little to give the GE pensioners cost-of-living increases from our pension fund, now overfunded by \$21 billion?...[T]he GE pension plan added nearly \$1.75 billion to the company's operating profits for 2000....Pensioners have not received an across-the-board cost-of-living increase since 1991....I have a dream that one day GE will do the right and moral thing and share more of our pension fund with us."—Helen Quirini, president, Local 301, IUE/CWA Retirees Council; co-chair, GE Justice Fund

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.

America@work

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CONTENTS

America's Workers
Heroes Every Day



4 CURRENTS

First Missouri state workers win a voice@work

Mexican trucks on the road to safety

Unions respond to bioterrorism

21 LIKE IT IS

21st-century workforce

22 OUT THERE

Peanuts for pachyderms, not college faculty

Red, white and greed

Organizing strategy fit to a 'T'

Nike ad nauseam

23 HOMEPAGE

Exhibit: "A History of the United Farm Workers Union"

Conference: Domestic Violence at the Workplace

Publications: *Building More Effective Unions*

Asian Pacific American Organizers and the New Labor Movement

The Race to the Bottom

Music: Pam Parker & Co.

Video: "Women of Steel"

Websightings: Helpful websites for keeping track of legislative and regulatory action

8

AMERICA'S WORKERS, HEROES EVERY DAY

Delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention paid tribute to the heroes of Sept. 11 and approved new initiatives to make America work for working families

13

THE FIGHT FOR FAIR TRADE

Coalition-building on a massive scale is the next step in the fight to ensure free trade is fair trade



THE [YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO] INDICATOR

15

HARD CHOICES IN HEALTH CARE BARGAINING

Skyrocketing health care costs mean hard choices at the bargaining table this year—but also the possibility for negotiating creative, long-lasting solutions



AUDREY LAM

17

LADDERS TO SUCCESS

Career training opens critical job opportunities for low-wage workers—and unions give them a rung up the ladders to success



HARVEY FINKLE

World Trade Cleanup: Making It Safe

In the first two months after the Sept. 11 attacks, the New York City Department of Health recorded more than 5,000 workplace injuries as workers began the massive job of cleaning up an estimated 1.2 million tons of rubble at the World Trade Center site. According to a report from the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training, recovery workers risked exposure to dozens of dangerous toxic materials and chemicals, including asbestos and arsenic.

Unions involved in the cleanup process are working closely with contractors and government agencies to protect workers from injury and exposure. Operating Engineers sent its mobile training unit from its national Hazardous Materials Project head-

quarters in Beckley, W.Va., to the lower Manhattan site, launching one of the first air monitoring programs and providing protective breathing and other gear.

IAFF developed a program to thoroughly train other New York City Fire Fighters as Hazmat specialists, after many of the 343 firefighters, highly trained hazardous materials specialists, were killed.

The Center to Protect Workers' Rights, part of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, developed a training program for workers employed by the four contractors hired to clean up the site. In addition, the CPWR worked with Iron Workers, Laborers, IUOE and other unions to create training for union members. ☐

Safety first: Unions involved in the World Trade Center cleanup are working to protect workers from injury and exposure to dozens of dangerous toxic materials and chemicals.

Mexican Trucks on the Road to Safety

Before traveling U.S. highways, Mexican trucks now must operate under the same stringent standards as U.S. rigs—a victory union members have worked for since passage of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement, which opened U.S. highways to unsafe Mexican trucks.

"This victory for the American traveling public is long overdue. Just a few months ago, the administration advocated opening the border to all Mexican truck traffic with little investment in a U.S. safety regime," says Teamsters President James P. Hoffa. The White House, Senate and House of Representatives reached the agreement in November.

Earlier this year, President Bush moved to open the border to Mexican trucks, despite studies that showed a large percentage of the Mexican vehicles did not meet U.S. safety standards.



After the White House proposed opening the border, highway safety groups joined unions in the fight to impose strict safety standards. The House of Representatives passed legislation restricting the trucks to their current area of operations in a narrow range north of the Mexican border. The Senate then approved a bill setting out stringent safety requirements.

The agreement also calls for building new border inspection stations, training U.S. Department of Transportation inspectors and creating a data system to determine whether Mexican trucks and drivers meet U.S. standards. ☐

UNIONS RESPOND TO BIOTERRORISM

The threat of bioterrorism has raised a new set of concerns for potential victims, such as Postal Workers members Thomas Morris Jr. and Joseph Curseen, Jr., who died in October of inhalation anthrax—and for workers such as health care providers, hazardous materials workers and firefighters who care for victims.

"There's no better time for getting unions and employers to look at what safeguards are in place and what needs changing," says James August, AFSCME assistant director for health and safety.

The APWU is providing members up-to-date information on anthrax through hotlines, at its website (www.apwu.org) and during weekly teleconferences in which hundreds of locals participate. APWU President William Burrus has declared no APWU member will be forced to work in an anthrax-contaminated building. The Letter Carriers (www.nalc.org), which counts one member successfully recovering from anthrax infection, also is in constant communication with members.


SEIU Local 113 in Minnesota is among the groups co-sponsoring a Jan. 17-18 conference to provide nurses information about treating victims of bioterrorism (www.mnnurses.org). And at the October AFL-CIO National Safety and Health Conference in Pittsburgh, a 500-strong audience of trade unionists heard the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's Rosemary Sokas, M.D., explain a range of potential biological hazards.

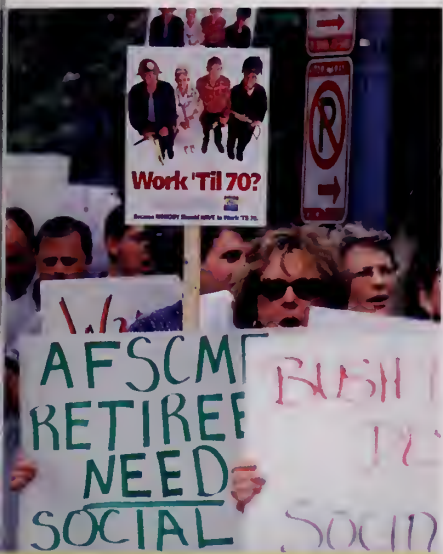
At the AFL-CIO conference, Flight Attendants President Pat Friend said: "We don't know what else lies ahead, but we do know that workers have been the victims of these attacks and that as unions we have a responsibility to protect them from these dangers." ☐

Social Security Commission Emerges From Closed Doors

When President George W. Bush appointed a commission on Social Security last year, he stacked it with well-known proponents of privatization and ordered its

members to come up with a concrete plan by December to transform the country's most successful form of family insurance into a windfall for Wall Street. But when the deadline arrived, the commission instead issued a list of three options for privatization—all of which would lead to cuts in today's program of guaranteed lifetime benefits.

Working families and their allies who have been rallying for reforms that will strengthen—not dismantle—Social Security say the commission report is a cop-out. Activists turned out in force to support strengthening Social Security during the commission's meetings this summer—but by fall, commission members were gathering behind closed doors, using legal loopholes that allowed them to meet away from public scrutiny. 



No solutions: Working families rallied outside Social Security commission meetings last summer, before commission members closed their doors to the public.

Port Truck Drivers on the Road to a Voice@Work


Some 50,000 port truck drivers across the nation will have a chance for a voice at work following a new alliance by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Longshoremen and Teamsters.

"By joining together, three of America's most powerful unions can help these workers achieve the wages and benefits that they deserve," says Teamsters President James P. Hoffa.

The unions announced the port workers alliance, which will eliminate competition at ports and coordinate union efforts to organize, during the December AFL-CIO Convention.

"Our goal is to unionize every trucker who works in longshore trucking," says ILA President John Bowers. "I want the trucking companies to know we mean business."

Nonunion port truck drivers earn an average of \$6 to \$7 an hour with no health coverage or other protections—a result of deregulation of the port trucking industry, says Port Division Director George Cashman.

A unionized port trucker workforce also "will bring harmony to our ports and strengthen ports activity," says ILWU President James Spinosa. 

SPOTLIGHT

First State Workers Win a Voice in Missouri

Missouri state workers have a voice on the job after 1,400 probation and parole officers voted Dec. 3 for SEIU Local 2000, the first public employees to join a union since collective bargaining became law in June.


"This was a huge victory, not just for us, but for the public as well," says Daniel Spring, a probation officer. "With proper input and resources, we'll be able to make sure that our children and communities remain safe."

The campaign to secure collective bargaining rights for state employees began in January 2000 and combined political action with organizing, says Local 2000 organizer Carrie Regelsperger. The first step involved mobilizing working families to elect a pro-union governor. SEIU joined with the Missouri union movement to support Bob Holden's (D) successful 2000 gubernatorial bid.

After Holden took office, unions lobbied for an executive order to allow state workers to join a union. At the same time, organizers assisted workers in the probation department who wanted to form a union, helping create worker committees and circulating a petition seeking a union vote.

Holden signed the executive order in June 2001 and Local 2000 filed for an election the next month. The key to victory: Workers took charge of the organizing campaign. "They talked to co-workers about the benefits of joining a union," says Regelsperger. "Nobody can convince another worker like someone who works beside him."

The campaign faced strong opposition from the state business community and some Republican legislators, Regelsperger says. But the probation workers remained strong, holding rallies and lobbying elected officials to defend their right to choose a union.

The union began negotiations for a first contract in December. 



STEWART HALPERIN

Winning a voice: Missouri probation officers Ashley Powell (left) and Urail Williams take part in a joint SEIU-AFSCME legislative forum to acquaint state legislators with the benefits of joining a union.

International Support Key to Kukdong Workers' Victory

When more than 1,100 workers at the Mexmode maquiladora, a major supplier of college sweatshirts for Nike, defied the odds and formed an independent union, their struggle highlighted the need for global labor laws: Even

though Mexico has strong labor laws on the books, they are not enforced, Marcela Muñoz, the 23-year-old leader of the Mexmode effort, told U.S. lawmakers and union leaders in November.

After years of receiving substandard pay (about \$37.85 a week), working long hours and being subjected to beatings, the workers—who were “represented” by a corrupt government-sponsored union—“realized we had no one to fight for us,” Muñoz says. After the Mexican government broke up their first protest by sending in riot troops and firing five employ-

ees, the workers reached out to the global union movement.

Aided by the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center and the anti-sweatshop group Workers Rights Consortium (WRC), U.S. unions began a high-profile campaign urging Nike to force its supplier to recognize the workers' choice of a union and to improve conditions.

In September, Mexmode's owners, South Korean-based Kukdong International, agreed to recognize the union, reinstate the fired workers and create a formal grievance process. The workers, mostly young, single mothers with little education, also received two pay raises last year.

“Without international support, it would have been impossible to achieve what we have,” Muñoz says.

Professor Huberto Juárez Nuñez of the Autonomous University of Puebla in Mexico says the recognition of the Mexmode union “shows the possibility of using pressure by consumers to force companies to adopt codes of conduct that treat workers with dignity.”

Union Communicators Celebrate the Best

Members of the International Labor Communications Association gathered Nov. 29 in Las Vegas to honor the best articles, videos, photos and websites that showcase workers' efforts to get a voice on the job. Meeting in conjunction with the AFL-CIO Convention, participants also re-elected George Burke, Fire Fighters assistant to the president for communications, as president and elected Tony Carobine, APWU, secretary-treasurer.

Paula Stomberg, communica-

tions director of Office and Professional Employees Local 378 in British Columbia, Canada, won the Max Steinbock award for her story “Racism: It Hurts.”

Other top winners include *Working America*, United Food and Commercial Workers, for general excellence among magazines with circulation of 250,000 or more and the Machinists for best international union website, www.goiam.org. For more winners, check out www.aflcio.org/convention01/updates1202_2.htm.

Union Members Open Their Hearts

In the weeks and months after the World Trade Center and Pentagon tragedies, union members have raised more than \$75 million to help the thousands of victims and their families, including those who have lost jobs.

More than 2,000 union donors have contributed \$2.3 million to the AFL-CIO Union Community Fund's Sept. 11th Relief Fund. Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., contributed \$500,000 and Kaiser Permanente workers contributed \$223,000 in cash value of accrued vacation or paid time off.

Through traditional fill-the-boot campaigns and large-scale fund-raising events, Fire Fighters, who lost more than 300

members in the attacks, raised about \$70 million to help the families of those who died.

SEIU has raised \$1.6 million and Communications Workers of America more than \$350,000. And in New York City, the central labor council has raised \$1 million.

During the holiday season, some unions spearheaded charitable drives focused on the smallest victims: the children. In Waukegan, Ill., IAFF Local 473 held a toy drive for children who had lost fathers in the attacks. Says Local 473 Vice President Jon Nordgren: “We knew that Christmas would be hard enough on the kids who lost their fathers in the attack.”



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

STEEL CITY SOLIDARITY

Steelworkers President Leo Gerard (left) joins more than 400 active and retired steelworkers who pitched tents for “Steel City Camp Solidarity” on the campus of the National Labor College just outside Washington, D.C., in mid-December. From their staging ground, they lobbied members of Congress to help them save steel jobs by backing an emergency federal loan guarantee for LTV Steel Co., Inc., which is in bankruptcy proceedings.

OUT FRONT

Our unions, state federations and central labor councils are doing remarkable things to give working families a strong voice at work, in politics, in the global economy and in our communities. We recognized examples of this great work at the recent AFL-CIO Convention in Las Vegas (see page 8), celebrating successes made possible by the everyday heroism of working people and the solidarity of our unions.

But we must do more to honor them. The American labor movement is failing to help new members organize at anywhere near the level we need to—and this failure must be addressed urgently by each one of us.

AFL-CIO unions represent about 13 million workers—about the same number we represented in 1955 when the AFL and the CIO merged. Convention delegates adopted a resolution committing our unions to three building blocks for growth: investing more resources in growth, leveraging everything else we do to support growth and changing the climate in which we organize to achieve growth. We recommitted to the goal of organizing 1 million new members into our unions each year—a rate about twice what we are doing now.

Passing a resolution is easy; living up to it is much harder. We have to work together, in new ways and with new fervor, to ensure this resolution is more than paper.

I assure you now that the federation will:

- Continue to work with unions to mount bigger and faster organizing campaigns and develop opportunities for unions to campaign together.
- Work to end wasteful competition.
- Maintain and increase the monies in our Organizing Fund.
- And stand with unions that take risks and try new approaches.

I know these tough times make resources tighter than ever. But that means we must find ways to do more—because workers need us more. Working families are suffering, and union contracts are still the best route to family-supporting wages and benefits, safe and decent working conditions and basic economic security, as well as a meaningful voice where it counts.

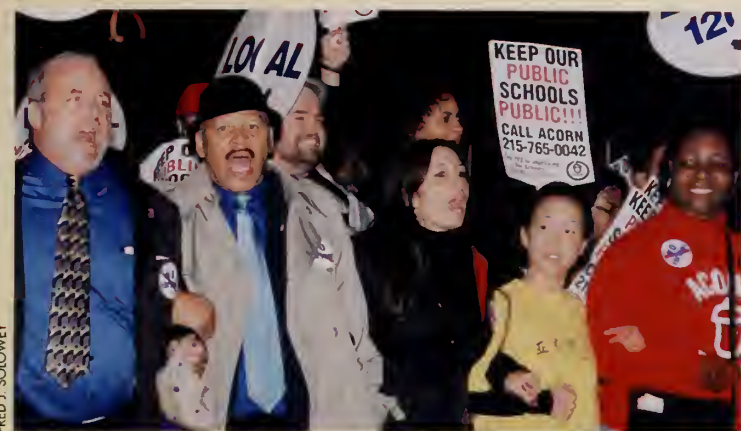
We've got exciting successes to build on: Focusing on helping workers throughout a market win their union, the Laborers have gone from representing 12 percent of New Jersey's asbestos abatement industry to 60 percent. In the past three years, AFSCME more than doubled its organizing investments and estimates 55,000 new members for 2001. Putting aside historic rivalries to reach common goals, the Teamsters, the ILA and the ILWU have formed a mutual assistance pact to help 50,000 port drivers gain a union voice at work.

More, bigger, faster, better. That's what we need in 2002. ☐

A New Year, An Urgent Goal

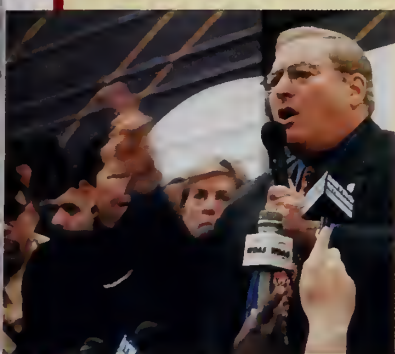


BY JOHN J. SWEENEY



Taking Back Schools in Philadelphia

As negotiations between the city and the state continued over the future of Philadelphia's public schools, working families won a major victory when Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street (D) and a coalition spearheaded by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, an AFT affiliate, forced Gov. Mark Schweiker (R) to abandon plans to privatize the entire system. But union leaders say Schweiker appears determined to privatize some schools in the 200,000-student district. Under the rallying cry "keep our public schools public," Philadelphia Federation of Teachers President Ted Kirsch (inset) joined hundreds of members of AFT and Firemen and Oilers/SEIU Local 1201, elected officials, students and community activists Nov. 28 to protest any privatization of city schools by the state. AFT has argued that smaller class size, safer schools and better reading and math programs—not privatization—are the keys to improving education. ☐



Philadelphia Federation of Teachers President Ted Kirsch (inset) joined hundreds of members of AFT and Firemen and Oilers/SEIU Local 1201, elected officials, students and community activists Nov. 28 to protest any privatization of city schools by the state. AFT has argued that smaller class size, safer schools and better reading and math programs—not privatization—are the keys to improving education. ☐

Labor Ready

Labor Ready, already the target of worker lawsuits and state investigations over its alleged violations of U.S. laws, now faces trouble in Canada.

The Canadian Building and Construction Trades Council launched a campaign in October focusing on possible violations of Canadian labor laws by the blue-collar temporary employment giant.

"It appears they have imported their U.S. practices into our country and we will not stand for it," says CBCTC Director Robert Blakely. "These practices include charging their workers a fee to get their daily pay, fees for safety equipment

and transportation, failing to pay workers, inadequate measures to protect worker safety and possible misclassification of workers leading to the underpayment of social insurance," he said.

The AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department has focused on Labor Ready's abuse of workers and is educating temp workers about their workplace rights. [See Feb. 2001, America@work.] At its quarterly meeting in October, Labor Ready announced the closing of 50 more U.S. offices in addition to those closed earlier this year and issued a bleak financial report that showed profits and revenue down and debt up. ☐



America's Workers Heroes Every Day

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI AND JANE BIRNBAUM

Delegates to the 24th AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention paid tribute to the heroes of Sept. 11 and looked to the future by approving new initiatives to make America work for working families



Winners: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka (seated) and AFSCME President Gerald McEntee (far right) applaud as UFCW Local 1000 Secretary-Treasurer Larry Stettinich and Local 8888 Political Action Chairman Bob Padgett accept awards for their unions' outstanding political and legislative efforts. (Inset) After her re-election, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson received hugs of congratulations from grandchildren, J.P. Ramirez and Lydia Maria Garcia.

With tears and cheers, nearly 1,000 delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention honored union heroes—those of Sept. 11 and everyday American workers—and rededicated themselves to building the union movement through organizing, political action, community outreach and global economic activism. Approving a raft of resolutions during the four-day gathering in Las Vegas Dec. 3–6, delegates also backed immigrants' rights, worker-centered recession recovery legislation and protection of civil liberties in a time of national crisis.

Elected officials—from Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota, Hillary Clinton of New York and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri to Republican Govs. Kenny Guinn of Nevada and George Pataki of New York—addressed the convention, standing with workers in their organizing and legislative efforts. They were joined by workers and union leaders from around the world. Delegates re-elected AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson; re-elected members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council; and elected two new council members, SAG President Melissa Gilbert and AFT Secretary-Treasurer Edward McElroy.

"In spite of incredible hardships, our movement is today stronger than ever," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "We are smarter and tougher and more united than ever. And we are building the power that working families in our country and around the world need and deserve."

Investing in organizing

Committing to building a larger, stronger movement, delegates voted to build organizing efforts by investing more resources, using unions' existing strengths to leverage growth and changing the organizing environment. In calling the Convention to order, Danny Thompson, executive secretary-treasurer of the Nevada State AFL-CIO, pointed out that "a full 20 percent of workers have the benefit of union membership" in Las Vegas. Yet overall, Sweeney said, "the American labor movement is failing to help

new members organize at anywhere near the level we need to." Since 1954, "we have declined in union density from representing one worker in three to now representing only one worker in eight"—making even more critical the need to "rebuild the movement using bold approaches that take risks

and that inspire workers to join us."

The Iron Workers are among unions investing more resources, recently launching an initiative to help workers in largely nonunion regions (such as the South) form unions by researching which nonunion sectors to organize, exploring industrywide campaigns and involving locals and district councils more fully in organizing. "If we don't grow our membership, it will be harder and harder to bargain good contracts or elect worker-friendly politicians," said Iron Workers President Joseph Hunt. The union aims to increase its membership by 5 percent a year. The Laborers, meanwhile, spent \$19 million on organizing in 2000.

Many unions—including Professional and Technical Engineers at Boeing—are building

on the strength of existing contracts to multiply their wins. "Our members understand that their wages and benefits are measured against the inferior living standards of nonunionized workers, and employers are constantly trying to drag us down," said Greg Junemann, IFPTE president. "So, we must continue to organize."

Shortly after affiliating with IFPTE in October 1999, the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace went on strike against Boeing for better health benefits and respect on the job. The enormous enthusiasm generated by the strike helped SPEEA win an agency fee election, giving the union the resources it needed to mount and win an organizing



Moving issues: TWU President Sonny Hall, IBT President James P. Hoffa and AFA President Pat Friend are working closely with other transportation unions in the wake of Sept. 11.

Member-Organizers on the Job

More and more unions are recruiting, training and deploying member-organizers to help workers get a voice on the job and build their union's strength—member-organizers like Ken Cainion and Gloria Ramirez.

Ken Cainion, who works at Johnson Controls in Suwanee, Ga., has helped organize at other Johnson Controls facilities in St. Louis and Shelbyville, Ky. "I like sharing my experiences, the before and after," said Cainion, a member of UAW Local 2378. "Our wages are higher and there's no more favoritism."

Gloria Ramirez, a press operator at a Ford plant in Dearborn, Mich., and member of UAW Local 600, became a member-organizer when her former husband was

involved in an organizing campaign at his plant. She's helped organize at independent parts plants Vico Products and Mexican Industries.

"An older lady at Mexican Industries thanked me for teaching her how to fight," said Ramirez. "I tell other UAW members that we need to help other places organize,"

she said. "If other plants have low wages, it makes it more difficult for us to negotiate for fair wages." ☐



Ken Cainion and Gloria Ramirez

America's Workers Heroes Every Day

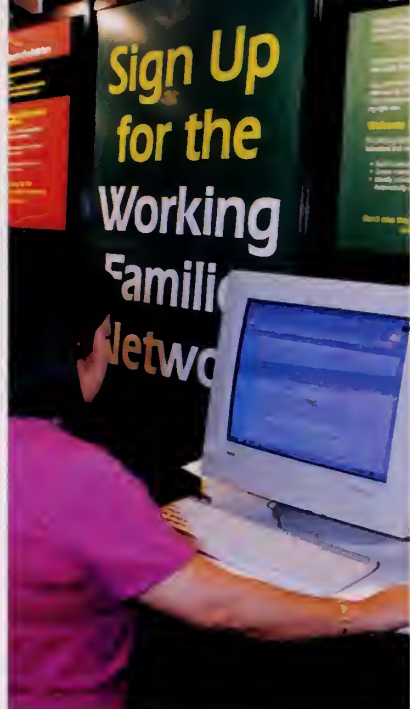
campaign at a Boeing facility in Wichita, Kan., among 4,200 chemists, computer technicians, clerical workers and others. Now 5,000 Boeing engineers in St. Louis are organizing with SPEEA.

During an organizing effort among graduate student employees at Michigan State University, AFT activists enlisted the support of state legislators and members of Congress. Rep. David Bonior (D), who traveled to the campus on election day, penned a piece for the student newspaper in which he said he would vote for the union if he was a graduate student.

"Two thousand graduate employees at Michigan State and Temple University in Philadelphia joined our ranks in the past year, and we owe a large part of their success to the support they received from campus, community, union and political allies to gain a strong voice at work," AFT President Sandra Feldman told delegates.

Mobilizing for year-round political and organizing action

Building on the success of Labor 2000, in which union members mobilized tens of thousands of grassroots activists and registered an unprecedented 1 million union households to vote, delegates recommitted their unions to stepped-up mobilization efforts through a year-round, 10-point political action program (see p. 24) that links



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

politics and organizing. A key part of the plan is increasing voter registration among union members by 10 percent before the 2002 elections.

"We are in a fight for the well-being of working families—but the needs of working families are being run over by corporate special interests and their undue influence in politics," said AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, who has led the AFL-CIO Executive Council's Political Committee for six years.

Delegates listened to satellite communications from Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), who were unable to travel to Las Vegas because of pending legislation in Con-

Creating a Working Families Network

Delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention utilized a new tool for quickly and effectively mobilizing activists in targeted legislative districts on issues critical to working families.

The Internet-based Working Families Network e-mail system, available to unions, state federations and central labor councils, made its debut at the AFL-CIO Convention, where delegates sent more than 3,200 faxes and e-mails urging Congress to support a strong economic stimulus package and oppose Fast Track trade promotion authority.

Ken Mass, president of the Nebraska State AFL-CIO, who took action via the network during the Convention, noted that 70 percent of union members use the Internet. "We have energetic members who are creating web pages for their locals. The number of our members involved in the legislative and political process will go up."

To sign up, call 202-637-5304. ☐

gress. "We need to pass a labor law that gives people a free choice to choose unions," said Gephardt, who added that such a bill would only pass with more worker-friendly legislators in office.

Operating Engineers President Frank Hanley said that unions can "build on our successes in education and mobilizing union household voters" through the 10-point program, which includes expanded communication with members, increased voter registration among members and massive get-out-the-vote efforts. "With a strong political program operating all year, every year—and with more and more candidates who are union-friendly or union members themselves—we'll have the pieces in place to begin making meaningful changes to outmoded labor laws," Hanley said.

To help ensure working people are back in the center of politics, the AFL-CIO Political Department and the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md., are creating an Institute for Political Leadership, which will train union members to run for office and manage campaigns. The Institute will support Target 5000, which aims to double the 2,500 union members now in office nationwide. One union member-lawmaker is Maggie Carlton, a Las Vegas coffee shop waitress and Culinary Workers Local 226/Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees member elected to the Nevada State Senate in 1998. "Like me, all across the country union members are running for office and winning elections," she told delegates. "And working families are better off because of that."

Recognizing the key to electing union members and other working family-

Union Member, Union Lawmaker

When delegates point to building political strength by electing union members to public office, they look to union members such as Michael Michaud. A paper finisher and member of PACE International Union Local 37 in East Millinocket, Maine, Michaud is the Democratic president of the Maine state Senate.

"I hear about a lot of things that are important to working people—such as health care costs, the expense of college education, workers' compensation laws," he says. "And my perspective is different because I know from my own experience and those of my fellow members how we're affected."

Elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1980, Michaud first ran for the state Senate in 1994. Member-to-member political campaigning, he says, was the key to his success. "It was a Republican district," he recalls, "and thanks to union campaigners, I was able to beat a millionaire Republican incumbent."

Serving in office requires financial sacrifice for Michaud—his legislative salary is less than his pay from the mill, where he is on unpaid leave when the Senate is in session. But the financial sacrifice is worth it: "I enjoy representing the people and fighting for the working people's issues at the state capital." ☐



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Michael Michaud

friendly candidates is year-round political action, the Convention honored unions, state federations and central labor councils for outstanding efforts. Winners included AFT, which turned out 87 percent of its members voting in the 2000 elections, the highest percentage federationwide, and the UAW for negotiating Election Day as a paid holiday. (Visit www.aflcio.org/convention01/updates_1205_2.htm for the full list of winners.)

Making the global economy work for working families

Bolstered by stirring talks from international union leaders who stressed the need for international solidarity, delegates called for an international union response to a global economy in which multinational corporations search for ever-lower labor costs at the expense of workers.

In approving a resolution on global fairness, delegates sought to create international solidarity between working people, recommit the AFL-CIO to its Campaign for Global Fairness, hold multinational corporations accountable for their labor practices and provide broad-based education for workers.

"When America's softening economy plunged after Sept. 11, economies across the world were affected," said Communications Workers of America President Morton Bahr, chairman of the Executive Council's Committee on Labor and the Global Economy. "We need more than economic stimulus

designed to make rich companies richer—we need a plan for global economic reshaping that puts working families first."

"We want global rules of the game that oblige companies to respect the right to organize," said Fackson Shamenda, president of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Established in 1949 to support workers' rights around the world, the ICFTU has 221 affiliated organizations in 148 countries and territories with a membership of 156 million.

Delegates also focused on rebuilding the American economy, condemning American policymakers who have failed manufacturing workers by negotiating trade agreements that leave domestic markets open to trading partners' predatory practices. Alternate delegate Kathleen Kinchius, president of CWA Local 9415 in Oakland, Calif., has experienced failed trade policies firsthand. Two Bay Area tool-and-die makers whose manufacturing customers are moving out of the United States recently closed, costing about 30 Local 9415 members their jobs in the past year. "We need enforceable labor and environmental standards overseas so that companies aren't so tempted to go there," she observed.

Responding to an economic recession worsened by the events of Sept. 11, delegates called on policymakers to pursue sound and sensible fiscal expansion policies—including extended unemployment benefits and targeted tax relief for low- and

middle-income workers—that simultaneously support jobless workers and stimulate the economy. To encourage job growth and meet long-standing needs, they urged increased federal investment in building, upgrading and updating the nation's public infrastructure.

Addressing the sacrifice of American workers who created the world's most efficient steel industry—only to be rewarded with "dumped" foreign steel now

Global Effects on a Local Economy

As the Steelworkers' director for District 12, which encompasses nine Southwestern states, Terry Bonds sees firsthand the effects of unfair global trade on the local economy—and on the workers who make the economy run. Bonds, who negotiates contracts for members at a range of steel plants, sees more and more of those plants closing their doors or reducing capacity every year because they are unable to compete with the price of foreign steel that its manufacturers sell below cost.

Bonds currently is negotiating with Geneva Steel near Salt Lake City; of the 1,800 Steelworkers it once employed, only 200 are still on the job. Negotiations aren't easy. "At the same time you're trying to get an improved contract for workers," he says,

"you're also trying to figure out how to keep the plant open and operating."

And it's not just a matter of how to make the workers operate the plant more efficiently: "We're already the most efficient steel industry in the world—but we can't compete with wages of 50 cents an hour or less."

Bonds was cheered by the convention's passage of a resolution calling on policymakers to respond to the steel crisis. "When representatives from many unions come together, we can get something done," he says. ☐



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Terry Bonds

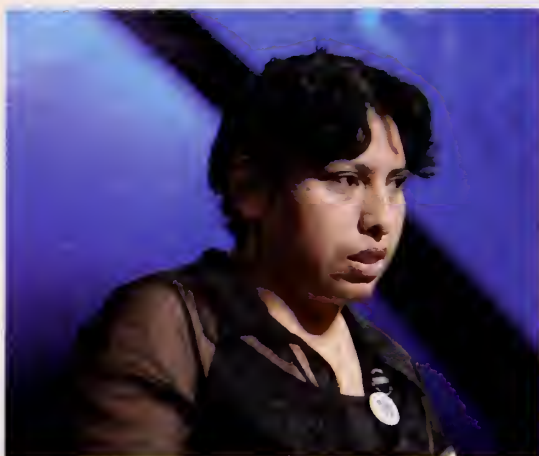
American Tragedy, Union Heroes **Union Members Lost to Terrorism**



Memory: Delegates laid flowers at a wall at the Convention hall commemorating members lost to terrorist attacks.

driving the industry to bankruptcy—delegates called for passage of a \$1 billion federal annual relief package to offset the effects of foreign subsidies.

"Social and economic justice means that whoever you are, wherever you work, you and your family have the security of decent wages in exchange for hard work, essential labor standards, protection in case of job loss, affordable health care and a decent standard of living in retirement," says Steelworkers President Leo Gerard.



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Grief: Sept. 11 widow Carmen Majia shared how she was denied government benefits because of her immigration status.

Building a nation of Union Cities

Acknowledging that activists win their efforts more resoundingly when they engage in coalition-building efforts among religious congregations, civil and women's rights groups, students, immigrants and retired union members, delegates passed resolutions to strengthen state federations and central labor councils.

"Incredible things are happening all over this country because of this new emphasis on building state and local labor movements," said William Lucy, AFSCME secretary-treasurer and secretary of the Executive Council's 21st Century Union Building Committee, who helped bestow awards on state and local leaders during a spirited ceremony.

Working families are ensuring they have a voice in their communities through two new strategies: spearheading Union Cities through central labor councils and creating New Alliances in partnership with their unions, state federations and labor councils.

The King County Labor Council in Washington State, which was among 14 communities recognized at the Convention as a Union City, brought together union and community allies to support UAW's successful organizing campaign among graduate employees at the University of Washington and the winning efforts to gain a voice on the job for nurses at Northwest Hospital. King County just elected a mayor and county council and port authority members who will actively support organizing. (For a complete list of communities recognized as Union Cities, visit www.aflcio.org/convention01/updates_1204_7.htm.)

New York leaders were the first to kick off their New Alliance in June 2001, and by the fall election season they were already seeing results. Other states that have launched New Alliance initiatives are North Carolina and Maryland/District of Columbia, with Oregon and Colorado on the way. Taken together, 20 percent of AFL-CIO union members live in New Alliance states.

As delegates debated the best ways to mobilize activists to help workers form unions and have a say in their communities, leaders such as AFSCME's McEntee kept them focused on their ultimate goal. "The challenges facing America's working families changed" after Sept. 11, he said. "But one thing has not changed: our determination to build power for working families. It's up to us to make a difference."

Civil and Human Rights Conference a Stirring Success

More than 400 participants packed the AFL-CIO's Civil and Human Rights Conference, where they grappled with the rights of immigrants, voters, lesbian and gay workers and people with disabilities—and unions' roles in safeguarding those rights. Meeting in Las Vegas prior to the AFL-CIO Convention, participants also discussed organizing in a changing economy and workforce and fighting hate crimes and global racism.

Many speakers—who included U.S. Commission on Civil Rights member Christopher Edley Jr.—noted the devastation of Sept. 11 should not deter unions from pursuing civil rights. "The issues we work on today are more important than ever," said Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

Union-Community Solidarity

Annie Wacker, community services liaison for the Milwaukee County Labor Council, learned the value of union and community solidarity in the midst of difficult contract negotiations when she was president of AFSCME Local 1053, a unit of clerical workers at Milwaukee public schools.

"I went to the labor council's solidarity committee to get help for informational picketing," said Wacker. "When the administration looked out the window, they saw we weren't alone."

Wacker soon became the labor council's mobilization chair. Her latest effort: a "freedom bus" for school bus drivers seeking to organize with AFSCME. "We rented a school bus, made a banner that said 'freedom' and filled the bus with union, religious and community leaders and went to four bus terminals, asking management not to harass and intimidate workers," she said.

Wacker traces her commitment to the rally at the Milwaukee school board. She said she realized the community had helped her and now "it's time for me to be there for others."



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Annie Wacker



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Jobs on the line: Ronald Sturgill, a member of USWA Local 1011 in Youngstown, Ohio, rallies Dec. 5 as a judge considers the future of LTV Steel, which is teetering on the verge of bankruptcy.

The Fight for Fair Trade

By JAMES B. PARKS

In their efforts to defeat Fast Track trade promotion authority last month, working families lost by one vote, after overwhelming pressure for passage from Big Business and the White House and a flood of last-minute backroom deals.

Congressional Republicans tried several times in recent months to bring Fast Track to the House floor, but each time they withdrew their proposals because they lacked the votes needed for passage. In 1997 and 1998, unions led the fight that defeated Fast Track in Congress. When the votes were counted Dec. 6, 28 Republicans who voted against Fast Track in 1998 decided to abandon their long-held principles and vote "Yes" to support a wartime president.

Following up on months of rallies and coalition efforts to defeat Fast Track, union activists contacted members of Congress with thousands of phone calls, e-mails and faxes in the days prior to the vote. Delegates at the

AFL-CIO Convention conveyed more than 2,000 faxes to Congress from the new AFL-CIO Working Families Network in a Legislative Action Center stationed outside the Convention floor. As a result, dozens of representatives from both parties voted against the flawed trade formula—and its one-point passage is far from a mandate for President Bush to pursue trade negotiations without consulting with Congress, says UNITE President Bruce Raynor.

"This Fast Track vote will only hasten the exports of more good jobs from this country while risking an even deeper economic impact," says Raynor. "It is appalling that Congress could take this action while ignoring the plight of hundreds of thousands of workers laid off because of the impact of the September 11th attacks."

The Senate Finance Committee already has completed work on a similar bill, and the full Senate is expected to consider the measure next spring.

Fast Track—redubbed "trade promotion authority" by the White House—would allow Bush to push anti-worker trade agreements such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas through Congress with no changes and minimal review. Fast Track also would prevent Congress from ensuring workers' rights and environmental protections are included in trade deals, limit the amount of time members of Congress can debate a trade treaty and prevent lawmakers from offering any amendments.

The Republican leadership managed to squeeze out a 215-214 victory by holding the vote open for 23 minutes after time had expired, by threatening to remove anti-Fast Track members from their committee chairs and by making deals and promises to gain votes, says Jennifer Esposito, Teamsters legislative representative. Among representatives who stood tough against brutal pressure from Fast Track supporters is Rep. Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.). Even though the leadership threatened to remove him from his post as chairman of the International Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Gilman still voted against Fast Track.

"[House Majority Whip] Tom DeLay was twisting arms and making promises from the beginning of the vote," Esposito says. In the end, only 21 Democrats voted for Fast Track and 23 Republicans, including Gilman, voted against it.

"The lobbyists, Capitol Hill horse traders and White House spinmeisters had to really hustle to pull this one out," says John Cavanaugh, director of the Institute for Policy Studies. "We will never know how many millions of dollars in campaign contributions or pork deals were needed to eke out a win. All this last-minute manipulation makes it impossible for them to claim that Fast Track passed on merit."

Now that Republican deal-making and arm twisting have given another foothold to greedy corporations through Fast Track, working families are adjusting their strategy to ensure future treaties protect workers' rights and the environment. The American public agrees with the working families that Fast Track is wrong: A poll released last year by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland found that 65 percent of Americans oppose Fast Track on its merits.

THE [YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO] VINDICATOR

The American public agrees Fast Track is wrong: 65 percent polled say they oppose Fast Track.

"Workers need to know what this vote means to them, to their jobs and the communities," says Fred Mason, president of the Maryland State and D.C. state federation. "If Fast Track passes, it will take the power to determine what we do in trade deals away from our elected representatives and give it to one man in the White House. That's not the American way."

The Fast Track to FTAA

The first impact of Fast Track, if passed in the Senate, almost surely will be a push by the Bush administration for speedy approval of FTAA. Modeled after the failed North American Free Trade Agreement, FTAA would create the world's largest free-trade zone by eliminating tariffs in every country in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba.

FTAA would spread the loss of jobs and ensuing poverty for low-wage workers that NAFTA has left in its wake. Since NAFTA went into effect in 1994, skyrocketing trade deficits with Mexico and Canada have caused



On track: The Dallas Council and trade union members around the world protested WTO policies on the November Global Unions Day of Action.

Putting the Brakes on the WTO

Fast Track takes on even more significance now that a new round of global trade talks is in the works following the November World Trade Organization meeting in the tiny island nation of Qatar.

Although the WTO agreed to re-examine trade policies making patented drugs unaffordable for poor nations, it failed to address workers' rights issues at the Qatar meeting, its first since Seattle in 1999, when tens of thousands of activists brought attention to workers' and environmental issues during WTO talks.

At the same time, the WTO, with the support of U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, agreed to reconsider U.S. anti-dumping and subsidy laws with the possibility that a new treaty would ban such laws. Anti-dumping laws allow the government to impose import restrictions and raise tariffs on imports that are sold here at less than production cost. Some foreign countries heavily subsidize their steel industries while restricting the amount of U.S. steel that can be imported. As a result, they "dump" steel into the U.S. market below the cost of production.

"We need those laws to protect our industry. Even though we are very efficient, we are competing against the practices of foreign countries that do not create a level playing field," says Steelworkers President Leo Gerard. Because foreign countries have dumped below-market-cost steel into the United States, the domestic steel industry has suffered serious setbacks: 26 steel companies have declared bankruptcy since Dec. 31, 1997; 12 plants have closed; and 30,000 steelworkers have lost their jobs.

In December, the federal International Trade Commission recommended higher tariffs and quotas on steel imports. The Bush administration must act on the recommendations by Feb. 15. If the new round of WTO trade talks outlaws anti-dumping regulations, the United States could be forced to rescind its laws and invalidate the ITC ruling.

"NAFTA has been a disaster, especially here in Texas," says Gene Freeland, financial secretary-treasurer of the Dallas AFL-CIO Council. "Globalization as it now exists—and NAFTA is a big part of it—is a danger to the American economy. It simply is a way for international companies to go where the wages are cheapest and leave the workers behind." He cites Tyco Toys' announcement that it will close its Dallas plant in March 2002 after 30 years and move operations to Mexico.

Next steps

Activists seeking to ensure workers' rights and environmental protections are part of FTAA say it is critical that U.S. workers strengthen coalitions with Latin and South American trade unions to create a hemispheric movement to stop FTAA. The AFL-CIO has joined with 50 million trade union members and activists in a Hemispheric Social Alliance to oppose FTAA.

"We must educate our members, demonstrate, whatever it takes to bring fairness to the trade negotiating process," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who is president of ORIT, the Latin American arm of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. In the past three years, the coalition opposing Fast Track has grown to include union, civil rights, environmental, student, religious and women's groups, Mason says. Despite setbacks on Fast Track, that coalition is still strong and committed to creating a global economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy. Activists are stepping up their efforts to educate the public about Fast Track and other upcoming trade agreements.

"The global fairness movement is not going to go away just because we lost this vote," Mason says. "We have to work harder, expand our coalitions and build our strength. And we have to make sure that those members of Congress who said they were friends of working families but voted against them are held accountable."



Bearing witness: UNITE President Bruce Raynor joined activists at a candlelight vigil at the U.S. Trade Representative office in Washington, D.C., as WTO ministers met in Qatar.

the loss of 766,030 actual and potential jobs in the United States, according to the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute. NAFTA also hurts Mexican workers, says José Luis Hernandez, vice president of UNT, a large Mexican labor federation. About 14 million Mexican farm workers are working less or not at all because of NAFTA, Hernandez says, because large U.S. agribusinesses have driven them out of the market.

Hard Choices

BY JANE BIRNBAUM

in Health Care Bargaining

Union leaders heading to the bargaining table this year say skyrocketing health care and prescription drug costs mean hard negotiations—but also the possibility for bargaining creative, long-lasting solutions such as maximizing unions' health care purchasing power.

In 2002, health care insurers are going to hit employers with double-digit price hikes for the fourth year in a row, the highest increase since the early 1990s, according to Hewitt Associates, a management consulting firm. Hewitt predicts average increases of 13 to 16 percent in 2002, and employers will try to pass along at least a quarter—between \$186 and \$463 per worker. The short-term picture is bleak: "Premiums have begun to rise at the fastest rate in almost a decade," says Larry Levitt, vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit health policy organization. "It's clear that when people come to the bargaining table next year, costs will be a big issue. Employers will be looking for bigger bites out of paychecks for health insurance."

Many Americans with union-negotiated health insurance will be affected by coverage changes in coming years. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, approximately 14 million workers in collective bargaining units in the public and private sectors have health coverage through their workplaces. Millions more—family members—share that coverage, which could increase total union-negotiated health coverage to as many as 56 million, according to Judy Mazo, research director for the Segal Company, an employee benefits consulting firm.

Bargainers will be asked to make hard decisions, experts predict, weighing higher deductibles and co-payments against fewer dollars for wage increases and other benefits. "Businesses are looking to reduce coverage or eliminate it completely, while most unions are looking to increase the cost shouldered by business," says Phyllis Borzi, a George Washington University school of public health research professor and union consultant.

David Blitzstein, director of negotiated benefits for the United Food and Commercial Workers, agrees. "You start looking at the benefit design, shifting the costs, all the things contrary to what we stand for," he says. "And at some point, shifting the burden to workers becomes an affordability issue: Someone making \$25,000 to \$35,000 a year is going to have a hard time managing a \$100 to \$150 monthly premium for family coverage—they're going to be choosing between health insurance and food."

Driven by rising prices and the increasing use of pharmaceuticals to treat ailments, prescription drugs are a

Health Care Costs on the Rise

Average annual increase in the price of medical insurance premiums that employers pay on behalf of workers

With a big hike projected for 2002, union activists are bargaining hard and crafting long-lasting solutions that will help shield working families from employer cost-shifting.



Resources for Health Care Bargaining

- The National Quality Forum, a nonprofit organization with members that include the AFL-CIO and many health care providers and employers, was created to develop a consumer-oriented national standard for measuring the quality of health care treatment. Click on www.qualityforum.org.

- The nonprofit, nonlobbying International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans is a good source of information on Taft-Hartley funds that provide health care and are jointly managed by union and employer trustees. Click on www.ifebp.org.

- RxHealthValue, with members including unions, health care providers and consumer activists, sponsors research on the benefits and costs of prescription drugs. Click on <http://redwood.he.net/~rxhv/>.

- The nonprofit Foundation for Accountability creates tools such as surveys that help consumers choose quality health care by asking about their medical treatment, their satisfaction with it and their outcomes. Click on www.facct.org. Or through www.workingfamilies.com, you can participate in a FACCT survey including personalized feedback at www.compareyourcare-aflcio.net. @

they couldn't afford their plan's 30 percent co-payment for visits to doctors. The board negotiated more health care dollars from employers because it was in a strong bargaining position, and it got the most for its money by contracting with nonprofit clinics that require no deductibles or co-payments—including the union's own UNITE Health Center and an SEIU District 1199-owned Long Island clinic. "We created a plan without barriers to care," says Wilfredo Larancuent, the joint board's manager. "Our members love going there. This is definitely our future direction."

Going forward, the union movement and individual locals must be much more concerned about the cost of health insurance, says Gibson. "They can't just passively accept what the conservative actuaries or the insurance companies are sticking them for in terms of premium increases," he says. "They've got to get their own experts, their own consultants, to come in and look at these figures and see whether there are less expensive ways of providing the same amount of coverage." @



Union care: In New York City, UNITE's Health Center serves as an affordable option for low-wage union members.

AUDREY LAM

major factor in rising health care costs. According to a July 2001 study sponsored by RxHealthValue, a Berkeley, Calif.-based nonprofit of unions, health care providers and community partners, average per capita spending on drugs for Americans 65 and older increased from \$872 in 1997 to \$1,378 in 2000—an 18.5 percent jump. For workers under 65, the respective numbers were \$231 and \$358, a 15.6 percent increase.

According to former research director for SEIU 1199's National Benefit Fund Geoffrey Gibson, unions should bargain for insurance plans that make use of pharmaceutical benefit management companies that create drug formularies. Under formularies, the pharmaceutical benefit managers get discounts from manufacturers for buying drugs in volume—and they can pick less expensive drugs that do the same thing as newer, pricier ones. That savings is then passed on to union health plans and members. Says Gibson: "Unions can tell members, 'Hey, you can have whatever drugs your doctors recommend, but take this list along with you to their offices and show them a drug just as good will cost you \$20 less.'"

While contract bargainers like Blitzstein deal with the immediate crisis, they also are exploring long-term health care strategies that take advantage of collective bargaining.

- **Maximizing volume:** In Phoenix, about 600 United Union of Roofers and Waterproofers Local 135 workers won health insurance this summer from a contractor eager to settle a lawsuit alleging wage underpayment. Health care coverage is paid through a Taft-Hartley fund—a trust jointly managed by employers and the union. The

next step: joining that small fund and others around the country with the National Roofers Union and Employers Joint Health and Welfare Fund, a collective fund of Taft-Hartley funds that now covers fewer than 2,000 of the union's 23,000 members. "If you have a big enough national fund, you have a lot more bargaining power," says John Martini, the union's organizing director and executive vice president.

- **Bargaining for quality care:** Agreements between the Machinists and the Boeing Corp. specify quality health care initiatives that include requiring physicians to track prescribed drugs, which reduces errors, and steering members to hospitals with track records and specialists for treating their particular medical problems. "What we've discovered is that with better-quality care, you get fewer medical errors," says Steve Sleight, IAM's director of strategic resources. "Then our members are healthier and their health care costs are lower."

- **Disease management:** Under this concept, unions agree that health care providers will examine workers' claims records and reach out to the patients. Two emergency room visits by a worker with asthma, for example, might trigger a call from medical personnel asking if there are pets at home. "It's a bit of 'Big Nurse' looking over your shoulder, but disease management is worth it," says Gibson. "It's not compulsory and there are price breaks for unions that should amount to about one-sixth of an ordinary premium."

- **Union-provided care:** Last year, when the contract came up for UNITE's Amalgamated Service and Allied Industries Joint Board in the New York City area, it became clear that the board's 5,000 laundry workers often went without health care because

Ladders to Success

BY JOAN FITZGERALD
AND VIRGINIA CARLSON

Career training opens critical job opportunities for low-wage workers—and unions give them a rung up the ladders to success.

When she was in ninth grade, Ellen Iwer wanted to be a doctor—but a school counselor said her grades weren't good enough. And after Iwer became pregnant in high school, it seemed that any health career was out of reach. Eventually, she found a part-time job in a unionized community services program for the profoundly mentally retarded, where she

makes \$9.23 an hour plus benefits. Iwer took an employer-paid course to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA), which enabled her to take on another part-time job in a unionized hospital. Yet Iwer still hoped to find a way of advancing in the health care field while caring for her two children.

Last year, Iwer got that chance. Through the AFSCME District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund in Philadelphia, she enrolled in the first licensed practical nurse course offered through the union. Like most of her classmates, Iwer works full-time while attending the 18-month course. Although she worries her children are not seeing enough of their mother, she also knows the sacrifice she is making now will make a better life for them. Based on prevailing wages in the area, she will make about \$18 an hour, plus benefits, as an LPN. Eventually, she hopes to take courses to become a registered nurse.

For Iwer and other low-wage workers looking for ways to advance to higher-skilled and better-paid jobs, access to career training is essential—and unions increasingly are a key part of creating those ladders to success.

Ladders to Success

Career-ladder strategies

Unions historically have spearheaded or supported programs that help workers advance their skills and careers through apprenticeship programs, community-based skills centers and creation of career ladders. Creating a career ladder also requires an employer willing to generate jobs with advancement potential and to think about developing the company's workforce. Yet, many companies have downsized their labor force and outsourced work that once provided steppingstones to more advanced jobs, and employers are ill-prepared to offer nontraditional ladders to the growing number of women and minority workers. Some industries, such as printing and metalworking, are dominated by small firms with few internal career advancement opportunities—and without clear career structures, workers may find changing jobs among firms makes it difficult to advance.

At the same time, workers face many barriers when seeking to continue their education—including parenting responsibilities, financial costs, child care arrangements, lack of transportation and scarcity of time. Without paid time off and financial support for advanced education, workers may well find the next rung of the career ladder out of reach.

Unions are in a unique position to harness the collective effort needed to ensure an individual's success along a career path. They are well-positioned to map out the ladders for different industries, because career ladders are not always linear. Unions can supply the institutional foundation from which workers can build and sustain strong relationships.

For example, staff at Printing Connections, a project for entry-level printing industry training in Milwaukee that we examine below, have been with the program since its inception, have ongoing relationships with printing companies and devise continuous incremental improvements. Unsuccessful programs, on the other hand, invariably have high staff turnover.

Successful programs also involve long-term relationships among workers, educators, unions and employers. Cheryl Feldman and Jim Ryan, coordinator and director, respectively, of the District 1199C

training program, have been in their positions for more than 20 years.

Of course, unionized workers in entry-level positions, such as janitors or CNAs, earn more and have benefits, even without advanced training.

Creating options in health care

By 2008, the health care field will include some of the fastest-growing—and lowest-paid—jobs in the nation, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (see page 21). The large numbers of entry-level and paraprofessional positions, the increased demand for services by an aging population, the growth of community-based care and the downsizing of hospital care make health care an ideal sector for a career ladder strategy.

Unions are fundamental to improving pay and working conditions for these low-wage hospital workers—dietary aides, CNAs and others—and to creating career

ladders. The average hourly wage for a union nursing assistant is \$10.17, while a nonunion assistant earns an average of \$8.55. Just belonging to a union, even with no career ladder, improves average CNA wages by almost 20 percent.

In AFSCME District 1199C, workers such as Iwer also have the opportunity to move up the career ladder through the Training and Upgrading Fund, bargained for by the union with hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities. With management contributing 1.5 percent of the gross payroll, the fund serves more than 2,000 participants a year through training, counseling, placement, certification testing and workshops. The fund recently opened a school of practical nursing approved by the state Board of Nursing. Because the union receives grants from the U.S. Department of Labor and other government funding sources and foundations, it also opens the program to community residents.



HARVEY FINKE

Movin' up: Ellen Iwer is among the first health care workers in a new LPN training program offered through AFSCME District 1199C.

California Unions Offered Funding to Develop Career Ladders

Cheryl Feldman, coordinator of the fund's Learning Center, says the Philadelphia area has a shortage of LPNs, so graduates practically are guaranteed a job. And higher wages—LPNs generally earn \$18 an hour—mean workers can better support their families and their communities.

SEIU local unions representing health care workers have negotiated hundreds of career ladders for health care workers throughout the country. In Cape Cod, Mass., SEIU Local 767 was instrumental in creating the Cape Cod Hospital career ladders program, which offers classes for union members such as housekeepers. The program represents a commitment to promote from within: Nearly 80 percent of all job openings in the hospital are filled by internal promotions.

The job ladder program, bargained for by Local 767 and the hospital, ensures opportunities for union members, reduces turnover and saves money in outside training and recruiting because most positions are filled from within.

Two courses that underpin further training, medical terminology and keyboarding, are taught on-site by community college staff. The program makes continuing education as easy as possible. Courses are offered between shifts, so employees can leave work one hour early or start one hour late to take a class offered on-site. For on-site courses, the hospital and the employee each donate one hour, and the \$25 fee is refunded on completion.

The hospital and union also jointly publish an annual job ladders book for employees listing all jobs in the facility. Workers can identify the requirements of another job along with the classes, degrees or certificates needed to qualify. The book also lists the assistance available, through the hospital or elsewhere, to complete the courses needed.

Making connections in the printing industry

In 1997, the Milwaukee Graphic Arts Institute, a worker training center spearheaded by Graphic Communications Local 577M and union printing companies, established Printing Connections, a project for entry-level printing industry training. The six- to eight-week training sessions,

Over the past year, the California Employment Development Department and the state Employment Training Panel launched Career Ladders for the 21st Century, with an initial \$15 million in job training funds. By enlisting the expertise of area unions, Career Ladders seeks to upgrade skills and increase the wages of low-wage workers.

Since Career Ladders was launched, several California unions have proposed skills upgrading efforts that have been or will be funded.

- Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees locals 2, 11 and 19 have joined with California hotel employer groups in Los Angeles, San Jose and San Francisco on a Career Ladders project covering employees in entry-level jobs in food services, front desk, housekeeping and sales. Skills upgrading options will include advancing within an occupation, such as from room attendant to housekeeping inspector, and between occupations, such as from a food services position to a sales job.
- SEIU Local 250 and Kaiser Permanente have joined on a Career Ladders project to enable Kaiser workers in entry-level jobs in nursing, housekeeping, food preparation, laundry and medical records to become medical assistants. The medical assistant position pays \$7,000 to \$10,000 a year more than most entry-level positions. Additionally, Local 250 and other SEIU unions are involved in projects to create higher-skilled and higher-paid senior certified nurse assistant positions.
- The Farm Workers has joined with farmers in Kern and Tulare counties on Project SOAR (Strengthen Our Agriculture Region) to increase farm workers' income by reducing the down time between jobs. Farm workers in these counties will be cross-trained in three crops—grapes, citrus and bare root roses—and their employment will be coordinated among the growers. A pilot project has proven successful and is being expanded.
- The Electrical Workers is supporting a Communications Career Path project to enable entry-level workers—employed by one of the nation's largest operators of digital cable television services and high-speed Internet access—to advance up four multi-step technician paths: construction, installers, service and systems.

The state is seeking other unions to work on Career Ladders and utilize the \$15 million funding available. For more information, contact Robert Marr, assistant director of the state Employment Development Department, at 916-654-8210. ☐

—Michael Bernick

Michael Bernick is director of the California Employment Development Department and author of three books. He is writing a book about work and craft in the 21st century.

funded by center resources and foundation support, build on the institute's connections to companies and unions to guide entry-level workers into stable career paths.

The program also benefits printing companies, giving employers access to a new workforce—one that includes more female and minority workers. It also allows them to find guidance in incorporating them on the shop floor. Heidi Gutenkunst, human resources director for the printing company Open First, says the program "is the bridge between the workplace and the

people who are trying to find employment." The program, says Gutenkunst, has enabled the company to find better-trained workers.

With about 300 trainees so far, Connections has enabled graduates to obtain entry-level jobs in union and nonunion shops. For workers in nonunion shops, institute staff work to help move them into union positions. In addition, the program has been successful in getting women hired in the press room, rather than just the bindery and pre-press areas in which they traditionally have been

Ladders to Success

employed. Connections now also includes skill enhancement and incumbent worker training.

Terrence Bradshaw, a 1999 Printing Connections trainee and father of two, says the training helped him move out of lesser-paying temporary jobs with no benefits into a stable position that includes higher wages and benefits. "At one time in my life I was doing a lot of temp jobs. Whatever you can imagine, I've done it through a temp service. I'm in one field now and I'm dedicating myself to that one field and everything that has to do with it."

Toward sturdier ladders


Some industries don't have viable career ladders. The printing industry is dominated by small firms, and career advancement generally doesn't take place within the same firm, making it more difficult. In other sectors, like health care, the next steps are more obvious, but most workers in entry-level jobs need considerable guidance in navigating a career pathway.

Government policy has a role in building and supporting career ladders. The

U.S. Department of Labor has funded pilot programs for incumbent worker training. While the Employment and Training Administration may continue to fund small demonstrations, the \$20 million appropriated by Congress for a formal incumbent worker demonstration program was reprogrammed by the Bush administration to support a Youth Offender initiative. Some states, such as Washington, have earmarked welfare reform funds from the federal block grant program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families savings to create job ladder programs for low-wage workers. Other states are upgrading training through Labor Department funds.

Because of their historical role as trainers and political activists, union leaders can negotiate TANF and Workforce Investment Act requirements on a local level. (Under WIA, funds to serve adults, dislocated workers and youths are allotted to states and, in turn, to local areas. State and local Workforce Investment Boards join with elected officials to set up One-Stop Career Centers to provide intensive training services.)

Unions also are well-positioned to map out the ladders for different industries, which don't follow a direct line to career advancement. Research confirms what union leaders and activists know: Many people find balancing work and family does not leave much time for training—indicating the need for policies that ensure everyone who works earns a decent wage and has health benefits as well as opportunities to pursue advancement.

Unions are our single best bet for making this happen. 

*Joan Fitzgerald is associate director of the Center for Urban and Regional Policy and associate professor of education at Northeastern University. She is working on a book on career ladder and wage progression strategies, *Moving Up in the New Economy*.*

Virginia Carlson is research director at World Business Chicago. She has worked on many projects identifying barriers to employment success, including a study in Illinois, "Are There Enough Jobs? Welfare Reform and Labor Market Reality."


Working for America

When D.C. General Hospital in Washington, D.C., closed last summer, more than 1,500 workers were laid off, with 90 percent belonging to unions including AFSCME, AFGE and the D.C. Nurses Association. The AFL-CIO Working for America Institute stepped in and worked with the Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO to create the CareerPath Project, which serves multiple unions by assessing, counseling, training and placing workers with employers in the same and other unionized industries.

Building career training opportunities is one of several institute goals.

Launched in 1999 as the successor to the Human Resources Development Institute, WAI seeks to retain, expand and create good jobs and build stronger communities by supporting "high-road" union-employer partnerships that respect workers and provide family-supportive wages and benefits.

During the past three years, WAI's annual conferences, numerous training sessions and targeted technical assistance initiatives have helped thousands of union members and workforce development professionals, and the institute has reached thousands more through its publications and website at www.workingforamerica.org.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the institute has worked closely with unions at every level to help union leaders meet the mounting jobs crisis. The institute has assisted state and local affiliates in their efforts to get public unemployment and job training programs to respond more effectively and quickly to the hardships faced by working families. The institute also has begun developing new high-road partnerships in which unions, employers, government agencies and community organizations work together to revitalize sectors decimated by recent layoffs. 



Full-time: Terrence Bradshaw moved from temp work to a career in printing through a union-employer training program.

MARK AVERY

21st-Century Workforce

Service-Sector Workers, Temp and Tech Employees

When she was helping form a union more than 20 years ago, says Barbara Janusiak, a critical care nurse at St. Francis Hospital in Milwaukee, some of her co-workers thought being in a union was “unprofessional.”

“I asked them, ‘What is more professional than having some control over your work environment?’” recalls Janusiak, a member of the Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5001/AFT. “Unless you have a contract, you can’t discuss important issues with your employer. It’s a mechanism to be reasonable and fair.”

As a health care worker, Janusiak is among the fastest-growing group of employees—professional workers across the wage spectrum who include high-tech workers, home health aides, teachers and cashiers, according to two newly updated reports from the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees, the 2001 editions of *Current Statistics on White-Collar Employees* and *Salaried and Professional Women: Relevant Statistics*.

“As the ranks of professionals grow, they increasingly will want to form unions to win a voice on the job,” says AFT Secretary-Treasurer Ed McElroy, newly elected chairman of the Department for Professional Employees and AFL-CIO vice president. “Union leaders and activists need to listen to the concerns of these workers as we build our movement.”

Among the key findings:

■ **The work world is increasingly white collar.** At the beginning of the 20th century, white-collar workers made up 18 percent of the workforce; now, they make up nearly 60 percent, according to the Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau

of Labor Statistics. Between 1998 and 2008, BLS projects employment of professional workers will increase by 27 percent.

■ **Computer-related jobs will continue to dominate the workplace.** The five occupations growing most rapidly—computer engineers, computer support specialists, systems analysts, database administrators and desktop publishing specialists—all center on computer technology. Taken together, these five jobs are projected to enjoy a whopping 98 percent growth rate by 2008, according to an analysis of BLS figures.

■ **The health care industry will thrive.** Today’s home care aides, medical assistants, respiratory therapists and others will have thousands more colleagues by 2008. While employment in all industries between 1998 and 2008 is expected to increase by 15.3 percent, employment in the health services industry will be nearly double that, 25.7 percent. Fully 14 percent of the new jobs created in that 10-year period are expected to be in health services.

■ **The service sector, which represents four of five jobs, dominates our economy.** The service sector covers all jobs that are not manufacturing, mining or construction—from accountants to zookeepers and everything in between. Almost *all* the job growth between 1998 and 2008—98 percent—is projected to be in the service sector. By 2008, more than eight out of every 10 jobs in the nation will be in the service sector.

■ **The ranks of contingent workers are growing faster than the workforce in general.** As companies began restructuring

and downsizing in the 1980s, they made many steady, secure full-time jobs into temporary or part-time jobs, or they hired independent contractors instead of full-time workers. Between 1980 and 1999, experts estimate the contingent workforce grew by more than 44 percent. Contingent workers often lack health insurance, pensions, paid sick leave and other benefits critical for working families, including the protections of federal labor laws. In many cases, contingent workers also have been denied the right to have a union voice on the job.

■ **Professionals are turning to unions to win a voice on the job.** Professionals are joining and forming unions at a faster rate than any other occupational group. Some 22 percent of professionals are in unions, compared with less than 15 percent of the workforce in general. In 2000, almost 50 percent of union members were white-collar workers, a figure that is expected to rise.

■ **As is true for most working women, professional women suffer from a persistent and growing wage gap.** In 2000, the average professional woman earned 74.2 cents for every dollar a professional man earned, down from 75.5 cents in 1996. Pursuing higher education does little to narrow the gap: A woman with a doctorate degree earned 29 percent less than her male counterpart in 1998, while a woman with a professional degree (such as law, medicine or business) earned 39 percent less.

“The inequity persists even though women have been earning more bachelor’s and master’s degrees than men for almost 20 years,” says Paul Almeida, DPE president. Becoming a union member does help women combat unequal pay. In 2000, union women earned weekly wages that were over 28 percent more than nonunion women. “Unions have a role to play in addressing equal pay,” says Janusiak. “Our contract bases pay on experience and seniority. It’s ageless and sexless.”

—Laureen Lazarovici

Current Statistics on White-Collar Employees and Salaried and Professional Women: Relevant Statistics are \$7.50 each from the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, or call 202-638-0320 in Washington, D.C., or toll-free, 800-442-5645. @



Nike Ad Nauseam

Frequently assailed for its sweatshop labor practices—such as paying 17 cents an hour to Indonesians who work up to 18 hours a day—Nike recently attempted to co-opt anti-sweatshop activism. The company created a fake activist group to “protest” the company’s new Air Zoom athletic shoes, which it called “the most offensive boots we’ve ever made.”

Australian activists—the real kind—fought back, causing

Nike’s misguided effort at “protest chic” to backfire. They decorated Nike billboards with stickers reading “\$1.25-per-day wages and 100 percent slave labor.” After just two days of news reports on the ad blitz, the Nike website featuring the campaign mysteriously disappeared. The Nike ads came at a time when activists were holding weekly protests at Nike stores in Melbourne to demand the company boost wages and respect the rights of workers to organize into unions.

“Unswooshing Nike will get the word out to other wayward corporations that ‘we, the people’ have our limits,” writes Kalle Lasn in *Adbusters*, a magazine devoted to exposing the truth behind advertising campaigns. “If you blur the line between authentic process and corporate spin, then you are going to get stung.” ☐

Organizing Strategy Fit to a ‘T’

Part-time workers at the United Parcel Service Omaha distribution center have turned the craze for “casual Fridays” into a day of union pride, donning brown “Part-Time UPS Worker, Full-Time Teamster” T-shirts at the end of each week.

Since March 2001, IBT Local 554 has given every part-time worker who joins the union a T-shirt, a move that has turned out to be “a great organizing tool,” says Jim Sheard, Local 554 secretary-treasurer. “Nobody wants to be the one without a T-shirt.”

More than 200 part-time workers have joined Local 554 since the union launched the campaign. For the first time in more than a decade, a majority of part-timers at the Omaha hub are union members, an impressive achievement in a so-called right to work state such as Nebraska.

The union contract allows business agents and stewards to meet with new hires to encourage them to join the union, and it’s there workers get their first glimpse of the T-shirt.

The campaign works, Sheard says, because of positive peer pressure. “The T-shirts are a way for the members to be reminded that they’re all part of the same family.” ☐



Solidarity@work:
A T-shirt campaign by Teamsters Local 554 has led to more than 200 part-time workers joining the union since March.

TEAMSTERS

Peanuts for Pachyderms, Not College Faculty

Passersby in downtown Chicago got an unexpected pop quiz in the fall when they read signs carried by rallying adjunct and part-time college faculty asking: “What do elephants and part-time faculty have in common?” The answer: “Both work for peanuts!”

The rally, during which faculty members distributed 1,500 bags of peanuts and were spurred on by a teacher in an elephant costume, was one of dozens of protests across the country Oct. 28–Nov. 3. Launched by Campus Equity Week, a coalition of organizations and unions that includes AFT, the events sought to inform the public about the poor pay and working conditions of part-time and nontenure-track faculty, a group that has been growing over the past decade.

Most make about half the pay of tenured professors and typically lack benefits and access to offices and phones, according to an October 2001 U.S. Department of Education study.

Many contingent faculty members also must travel hundreds of miles each day to teach at more than one campus just to make a living, says Sue Kaufman, secretary-treasurer of University Professionals of Illinois Local 4100/AFT: “It’s outrageous the way we treat people who teach our future citizens.” ☐



LEE BAIGEMANN

Long memories: In Illinois, part-time faculty members made the point that living on peanuts is for elephants.

Red, White and Greed

Corporate giants showed their true colors following the Sept. 11 tragedy—and in the case of Wal-Mart and Starbucks, those colors weren’t red, white and blue. While the Wal-Mart-owned Sam’s Club stores boasted record sales of American flags, Sam’s Club managers in Las Vegas ordered workers to remove American flag stickers—provided by United Food and Commercial Workers—from their name badges.

“I can’t believe Wal-Mart would be so insensitive and unpatriotic during this crisis,” says employee Linda Green.

Customers and employees were so incensed they launched an e-mail campaign to Wal-Mart’s chief executive officer and store managers. “Although your company markets itself as good for America, I wonder where your

allegiance truly lies,” wrote Andrea Goldberger from Albany, N.Y.

A week later, Wal-Mart issued a statement saying workers could wear American flag stickers, as long as their names were visible, but did not apologize to the employees.

In Kent, Wash., Starbucks employee Don Goodson received three “black marks” in his personnel file because he missed several work shifts at the company’s roasting plant. The reason? He was stranded in Texas after airports were shut down Sept. 11.

If Goodson, a supporter of the Operating Engineers’ efforts to gain a contract there, gets nine black marks, he could be fired. The IUOE has filed unfair labor practices charges against Starbucks over this and other incidents. ☐

EXHIBIT



“La Causa: A History of the United Farm Workers Union,” a traveling exhibit that traces the 36-year struggle of the Farm Workers to win justice for workers who toil in the fields, is on display at the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark in Haledon, N.J., through the end of January. Visitors also may borrow the museum’s books and videocassettes about the UFW. For more information and directions, call 973-595-7953 or e-mail labormuseum@aol.com. @

PUBLICATIONS

Building More Effective Unions, by Paul F. Clark, makes the case for applying behavioral science to increasing union effectiveness. The author, an associate professor of labor studies and industrial relations at Pennsylvania State University, identifies union effectiveness as a union’s ability to organize, the outcomes of its bargaining and its impact on society. Clark finds a direct correlation between a union’s overall success

and the extent to which individual members participate—and concludes that unions should focus on building members’ support across the board. \$19.95. Cornell University Press, www.cornellpress.cornell.edu.

Voices for Justice: Asian Pacific American Organizers and the New Labor Movement, by Kent Wong, provides first-

person accounts of organizing, based on interviews with 10 Asian American organizers, all of whom helped build the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. Their common bond is their commitment to organizing for social and economic justice, and their stories include how and why they became organizers. Kent Wong, founding president of APALA, is director of the Center for Labor Research and Education at the University of California at Los Angeles. \$10.

The Race to the Bottom, by Alan Tonelson, refutes the premise that unfettered globalization is inherently good for everyone and should occur free of government restraints. Tonelson, a research fellow at the U.S. Business and Industry Council, says the result of corporations moving jobs overseas beginning in the 1960s has been

diminished bargaining power for workers, weaker unions and lower wages. Trade treaties, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, speed up the process, Tonelson observes. To reverse the race to the bottom requires a substantial rethinking of the nation’s approach to trade and a commitment to develop policies that aid U.S. workers. \$25. Westview Press, www.westviewpress.com. @

WEBSIGHTINGS

Keeping track of legislative and regulatory activities at the state and federal government levels can be speeded up with these websites.

[www.llsdc.org/sourcebook/state-leg.](http://www.llsdc.org/sourcebook/state-leg.htm)

htm—The website of the Law Librarians Society of Washington, D.C., provides a complete listing of links for state legislatures, laws and regulations.

www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm—Tour this website to find links to states, territories and American Indian tribal governments and useful federal resources and links to regional councils and commissions, 52 national organizations and 15 related websites. @

VIDEO

“Women of Steel,” a 23-minute video by the Steelworkers, captures the personal stories of female union activists and their diverse paths in building a stronger voice for women and working families within the USWA. The video gives nonunion women a better understanding of the benefits of unionization and the gains the union has made on issues important to women. \$8 each. Contact: USWA, Attn: Sharon Stiller, president’s assistant on women’s issues, 5 Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222. @

MUSIC

“Working Class,” by Pam Parker & Co., includes music from rhythm and blues to folk and rock. Selections include the Beatles’ “Blackbird” and “Parker’s Blues,” written by Pam Parker and John Parker, about a working-class woman’s struggle to survive financially and her belief that the answer is a well-paying union job. On the South African song “Seeyahamba,” Parker is joined by her son, Jobari Parker Namdar, and the (Washington) DC Labor Chorus. This is the first CD for Parker, a member of The Newspaper Guild/CWA, who has spent many years as a social justice singer and is joined here by members of the Washington, D.C.-based rock ’n’ roll and rhythm-and-blues band Bones of Contention. \$15. Available at www.laborheritage.org. @



Building Blocks for Working Families' Future

The nearly 1,000 delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention in December laid plans for improving lives for America's working families, committing our union movement to:

Organize for a Voice@Work

- ☐ **Invest more resources**
 - Expand organizing programs
 - Involve more members in organizing
- ☐ **Use our power and expertise**
 - Bargain to organize and grow
 - Work together across union lines
 - Seek alternatives to unfair NLRB and NMB processes
 - Improve state and local AFL-CIO capabilities through full affiliation
- ☐ **Change the organizing environment**
 - Enlist community allies in demanding employers respect workers' rights
 - Involve elected officials in organizing campaigns

Make the Economy Work for Working Families

- ☐ **Change the rules of the global economy**
 - Build solidarity through global unions
 - Demand workers' rights in trade agreements
 - Challenge the WTO, IMF and other global decision makers
- ☐ **Hold corporations accountable**
 - Help workers organize and bargain
 - Support high-road employers
 - Conduct comprehensive campaigns with anti-worker employers
 - Ensure capital stewardship
- ☐ **Provide broad-based member education**
 - Link domestic and global issues
- ☐ **Build international solidarity**
 - Promote and enforce ILO principles
 - Support democratic trade unions

Build a Government of, by and for the People

- ☐ **Support election reform**
- ☐ **Elect union members to office**
- ☐ **Build on success**
 - Link politics to organizing, reinforcing the freedom to choose a union
 - Assign a coordinator for each local and each workplace
 - Distribute more than one leaflet a month in each workplace
 - Maximize member contact through union publications
 - Include leaflets and materials in all communication from local union presidents
 - Incorporate issue information into routine phone calls
 - Maintain an up-to-date membership list
 - Increase member registration by at least 10 percent
 - Spearhead massive get-out-the-vote efforts
 - Build a rapid response network in the workplace

Ensure a Voice for Working Families in Our Communities

- ☐ Build stronger state and local union movements through the New Alliance and Union Cities initiatives
- ☐ Create and nurture community alliances
- ☐ Foster lifelong unionism through the Alliance for Retired Americans
- ☐ Assist communities through Union Community Fund worksite giving
- ☐ Lead the fight for immigrant workers' rights

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

FEBRUARY 2002

America @work

Pulling
Together
or
Apart?

NEUBECKER

ALSO INSIDE:
**Making Every
Vote Count**
**Building on
Success**
**Working
Families
Network**

"I WORKED FOR a company that sold lumber and the drivers and warehouse staff were unionized and stayed informed and supported their efforts. Before the union, those workers were treated poorly. After they unionized, they were treated with the respect all human beings, regardless of position and title, deserve. I just want to say 'thanks'—you are the true representatives of the American people."—*Maureen Shaloo, Morristown, N.J.*

SAY WHAT?

What is your union planning for Labor 2002?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@affcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

ABOUT WHAT YOUR UNION'S ORGANIZING AND POLITICAL ACTION GOALS ARE FOR THE COMING YEAR:

"UFCW LOCAL 1099 represents more than 22,000 members in southwestern Ohio, northern Kentucky and southeastern Indiana. For 2002, our local's organizing goals include working with our international union to target Wal-Mart, which despite its carefully crafted public image is ultimately anti-family and anti-union. Our top goal of the Labor 2002 campaign is to increase our members' political awareness. We seek to boost the number and dollar amount of our members' voluntary contributions; increase the percentage of our members registered to vote by 10 percent and urge them to participate in get-out-the-vote efforts and support labor-endorsed candidates."—*John Marrone, director of field services, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1099*

"SINCE TAKING OFFICE, President Bush and his corporate pals have done everything they could to do away with safe working standards, oppose policies that would help working families, support economic stimulus programs that help corporate America but [do] little for working people who are out of work and give tax breaks to those who need them the least. When the election is over, let us not forget the needs of working people—whether our candidates win or not—we can support organized labor whether we are in office or not."—*Bruce Archer, candidate for Dallas County district clerk, Mesquite, Texas*

"THANK YOU FOR supporting the American worker. As a worker in manufacturing, I am very concerned about high-tech jobs leaving this country and moving to China. U.S. companies are selling the American workers down the drain, all for the sake of profits. The sad part about it, our government is allowing it to happen. In my state of Pennsylvania (Schuylkill County), there are no manufacturing plants being built, only warehouses full of products from China and Mexico. Something must be done to stop the export of American jobs. Please continue to support the American worker."—*Robert Williams, Tremont, Pa.*

"MY WIFE IS a nurse at APMC in Ashtabula, Ohio, where we live. We are both proud to be members of the AFL-CIO. [On] Jan. 1, my wife [was] given the honor of carrying the Olympic torch. She is very honored and proud to have been chosen. She is also very proud to be union."—*David Bildstein, Bricklayers Local 5, Cleveland*

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.



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CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

Organizing + political action = Voice@Work

Home care workers win in Oregon

Made in New York

12 TOOLBOX

No support for the nation's workers

21 LIKE IT IS

Outraged at injustice

22 OUT THERE

A grassroots education

Whoville, USA

Blonds have more funds

23 HOMEPAGE

Publications: *Power Politics*

≈ *An Introduction to the Law of Employment Discrimination*

The Union Member's Complete Guide

Music: "Have You Been to Jail for Justice?"

Websightings: Websites on balancing work and family, issues facing women and the Family and Medical Leave Act

School Curriculum: *Lessons in Labor History*

Bulletin: *Violence Against Colombian Trade Unions*

8

PULLING TOGETHER OR APART?

Hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs in the past few months, yet after years of slashing the nation's critical social safety net, lawmakers have failed to ensure working families receive the health care, food support and unemployment insurance they need to get through tough times

13

MAKING EVERY VOTE COUNT

Election reform is the civil rights issue of 2002—and the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions are calling for an election system in which the fundamental right to vote is guaranteed to every citizen



MIKE EVEN

16

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

In the 2001 elections, union activists put in motion proven grassroots strategies that could serve as valuable guideposts in this year's critical races



NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

19

WORKING FAMILIES NETWORK

The AFL-CIO has launched the Working Families Network, a powerful Internet-based e-mail system to help union leaders get the word out about political, legislative and organizing campaigns



"AMERICAN HERITAGE," 1975

AFL-CIO Hosts Fasanella Exhibit

The AFL-CIO is celebrating the life and art of Ralph Fasanella with an exhibit through April in the federation's lobby and 8th floor displaying 15 paintings that span nearly 50 years of his work. Eva Fasanella, the artist's widow, and Paul D'Ambrosio, chief curator of the New York State Historical Association and author of *Ralph Fasanella's America*, were special guests at a Feb. 6 reception.

Fasanella, once an organizer for the unaffiliated United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, was a self-taught painter whose canvases captured working-class heroes, urban life and the hope of America.

One of his most famous paintings, "Lawrence 1912: The Great Strike," hangs permanently in the AFL-CIO lobby. The painting had been displayed in the hearing room of the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education until the Republican majority ordered it removed in 1994.

The exhibit is courtesy of American Contemporary Artists Galleries, New York City and the Fasanella estate. ☐

NLRB: Lawmakers Can Support Organizing Efforts

Rebuffing an employer's audacious attempt to silence not only workers but their political allies, the National Labor Relations Board in January certified workers' choice of UAW at the Saint-Gobain Corp.'s abrasives factory in Worcester, Mass.

After workers voted to join UAW in August, the company argued the vote should be thrown out because Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.) made statements supporting the 850 workers, which the company said "interfered" with the vote. The NLRB

rejected the argument. In fact, 12 members of Congress in November wrote to the company CEO, telling him, "Public officials have the right to express their views on events, including attempts by workers to organize a union."

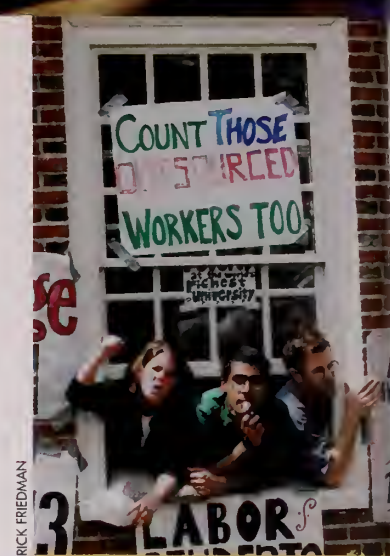
Following the ruling, the company recognized the union and will begin negotiations shortly.

The ruling "is a total vindication of Rep. Jim McGovern, who spoke out courageously in support of the workers' right to organize," says UAW Region 9A Director Phil Wheeler. ☐

Harvard Committee Backs Living Wage

Responding to an impressive three-week student sit-in last spring, a committee at Harvard University is advising the institution to raise the pay of low-wage campus employees to no less than a range of \$10.82–\$11.30 per hour. As a result of student, union and community actions, university officials established a committee of students, workers, faculty members and administrators to recommend ways to improve pay and benefits for the 1,500 janitors, security guards and food service workers. Most make less than \$10.25 an hour at the Ivy League university in Cambridge, Mass.

Though hailing the committee's support for a living wage, union and student leaders say Harvard also needs to ensure all workers' freedom to form unions free from employer intimidation. "While the report urges the university to obey the letter of labor law," says Ben McKean, a student protestor and committee member, "it condones contractors' use of coercive tactics like captive-audience meetings that are unworthy of a great university." ☐



No spring fling: Last year's three-week sit-in at Harvard led to formal support for paying low-wage workers a living wage.

Winning With Politics and Organizing

Combining politics and organizing, 13,000 home care workers in Oregon won a voice on the job Dec. 14 with SEIU Local 503.

The caregivers wanted to join a union but because they were classified as "independent contractors," they had no employer with whom to bargain. The workers needed to change the law and create an employer of record before they could form a union.

The workers formed a corps of political organizers, who came together with advocates for seniors and people with disabilities, who registered voters and lobbied key legislators. They convinced Oregon voters to pass a measure creating an employer and giving workers the right to choose a union in November 2000 and got the state legislature to implement the voters' wishes.

Says home care worker Joye Willman: "You have to build both the foundation and then the rest of the house." ☐



UNION COMMUNITY FUND SLAM DUNK FROM NBA PLAYERS

Professional basketball players stepped up to the line to help the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Some 417 players, all members of National Basketball Association teams, donated \$525,000 to the AFL-CIO Union Community Fund's September 11th Relief Fund. The athletes are members of the unaffiliated National Basketball Players Association.

The Union Community Fund, launched by the AFL-CIO two years ago as labor's charity for working families, has distributed \$1.6 million in grants to 26 union-sponsored and community organizations that serve working families through its September 11th Relief Fund.

The September 11th fund has received more than \$2.8 million in donations as of mid-January from individual union members and local and national unions, says fund



AP PHOTO/KEVORK DJANSEZIAN

Helping hand: Shaquille O'Neal was one of 417 NBA players who contributed to the Union Community Fund's Sept. 11th Relief Fund.

Executive Director Jim Sessions. The Union Community Fund distributes money to service-based organizations in the communities whose aid efforts include helping families of the more than 600 union members killed in the attacks, assisting laid-off New York City garment workers and working families who have lost jobs or seen their work hours reduced. ☐

Enron: Lost Chance at Preventing the Debacle

A month before energy giant Enron Corp. filed for the largest corporate bankruptcy in U.S. history, the AFL-CIO and Amalgamated Bank urged Enron executives to ensure Enron's accountability to its shareholders and restore confidence to potential investors who might have come to Enron's rescue.

After misrepresenting the company's assets and liabilities, top Enron executives bailed out as the company's stock value plummeted—taking more than \$1 billion in profit. At the same time, Enron barred employees from selling stock in their 401(k) retirement funds, virtually destroying the retirement security of 11,000 employees

whose retirement accounts were based on worthless Enron stock. As a result of Enron's actions, the average index fund lost .5 percent, affecting the pension fund assets of millions of Americans.

On Nov. 2, the AFL-CIO and Amalgamated Bank wrote Enron CEO and chairman Kenneth Lay and William Powell, chairman of an internal Enron committee determining the cause of the energy company's rapid fall in value. They urged Lay and Williams to take steps to fully disclose financial transactions that led to the company's \$1.2 billion reduction in shareholder equity, reveal conflicts of interest that might have influenced the

SPOTLIGHT

Organizing + Political Action = Voice@Work

Thousands of University of Maryland workers have a voice on the job after efforts by AFSCME activists who directed their political and legislative strength to win collective bargaining rights at the state's 13 university campuses.

In May 2001, Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) signed a law giving university workers the right to join unions and negotiate with administrators for better wages and benefits. In a quick succession of resounding victories in November and December, 3,500 workers chose AFSCME—including a unit of 1,900 staffers at the state's flagship school, the University of Maryland at College Park who voted Dec. 11. Other units have won at Frostburg State, Morgan State and Bowie State universities and Baltimore City Community College, Coppin State College, St. Mary's College and the University of Maryland University College.

The 20-year campaign to ensure Maryland public employees have a voice at work began bearing fruit in 1996, when Glendening issued an executive order giving state employees the right to form unions, resulting in a voice on the job for 30,000 executive branch workers who joined AFSCME. In 1999, the state legislature made that freedom state law.

"For years, Maryland higher education staff have been taken for granted," says Sally Davies, AFSCME Council 92 president. "But now we have a voice, and we are making ourselves heard loud and clear." ☐



CRAIG TERKOWITZ

An educated decision: Workers at University of Maryland, College Park, celebrate their union victory.

actions of the company's directors or executives and adopt reforms and policies to prevent any such actions.

In January, as a result of a lawsuit by Amalgamated Bank alleging Enron executives artificially inflated the price of the company's stock, a federal judge ruled she has the authority to

freeze \$1.1 billion in assets belonging to Enron executives.

"The Enron debacle shows the need to address the conflicts of interests that are hurting working families in the capital markets," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told a House committee in December. ☐

State Action

As state legislatures convene for the year, unions are developing strategies to win solid victories for working families in state capitols, focusing on election reform, affordable prescription drugs, unemployment insurance and fiscal responsibility.

Union activists in several states—including Colorado, Indiana, Ohio and Rhode Island—are spearheading drives for making prescription drugs more affordable for seniors. Meanwhile, leaders in Georgia, New Mexico and other states are working to improve unemployment benefits. Tennessee and West Virginia activists plan to work on

election reform, while Wisconsin is among several states to focus on ensuring that state contracts go only to responsible contractors. In several states, union members elected to state legislatures plan to carry the bills.

“With the anti-labor agenda we’re facing in Congress, it’s even more important that state and local governments stand up and speak out in support of working families,” says Ellen Golombek, president of the Colorado AFL-CIO. “Any legislator who attempts to hurt working families during these difficult times can and should face their own unemployment in November.” ☐

Made in New York

Celebrities provided the glamour and unionists supplied the activist energy at a December fashion show at Manhattan’s “W” Hotel, where UNITE leaders introduced a “Made in New York” shopping guide for finding apparel bearing the “Proudly Made in New York” hangtag.



DAVE ALLOCCA/DWI

Modeling justice: UNITE President Bruce Raynor, fashion designer Nicole Miller, singer Cyndi Lauper and Miss USA Kandace Krueger show their support for New York workers.

After thousands of New York’s 60,000 garment workers lost their jobs and thousands more lost hours following Sept. 11, UNITE launched the campaign to encourage shoppers to buy clothes made in the city.

Pop star Cyndi Lauper co-hosted the fashion show, telling the 300-strong crowd her grandparents were New York garment workers.

Some people may “feel now is not a good time to treat themselves,” says

Geneva Custom Shirts seamstress and UNITE Local 574 member Sofia Hatzigeorgiadis, whose work schedule was cut from five to four days after Sept. 11. “But for those who can afford custom shirts made here in New York, we hope they will come in soon.”

The shopping guide is available online at www.uniteunion.org/miny/index.htm. ☐

Next Steps in Tackling Bioterrorism

In the aftermath of the spread of deadly anthrax spores through the U.S. mail, unions are ensuring workers’ concerns are addressed as the nation responds to bioterrorism.

Unions such as the Letter Carriers and Postal Workers lobbied Congress for legislation that ensures protections and training for workers who are the “first responders” after an incident—fire, police and medical personnel—and those involved in recovery efforts and to see that such workers help plan the responses to bioterrorism threats. The bill is pending in Congress.

Meanwhile, the Laborers won a U.S. Department of Labor grant to develop a new training program on safe removal of biological hazards. “Our members have been leading the way in hazardous waste removal for

many years, and we look forward to using our expertise in this field to help workers and our country to feel safe and secure,” says LIUNA President Terence M. O’Sullivan.

APWU sponsored a two-day conference in January that brought together experts from government, labor and academia to examine responses to bioterrorist threats.

Postal employee unions also lobbied Congress for \$500 million to pay for the costs of equipment to irradiate mail and provide other protections after anthrax-laced letters were blamed for killing five people, including two postal workers. APWU President William Burrus is asking Congress to fund a study on the long-term effects of antibiotics on healthy postal workers who took the treatments as a preventative measure. ☐

School Voucher Ads Deceptive

Ads by the Black Alliance for Educational Options featuring African American parents speaking in support of school vouchers have been flickering across television screens over the past several months. But a recent report by the People For the American Way Foundation finds the group is funded by far-right organizations that also support privatizing schools and curbing affirmative action.

Vouchers provide public funds for students to attend private schools, siphoning money from public schools that are free and open to all children and accountable to parents and taxpayers.

Community Voice or Captive of the Right? A Closer Look at the Black Alliance for Educational Options is available at www.pfaw.org/issues/education/vouchers/factsheets/BAEORep12_01.pdf. ☐

Remembering Moe Foner

The union movement lost one of its strongest advocates for expressing workers’ messages through the arts when Morris (Moe) Foner died Jan. 10. Foner, 86, was the longtime executive secretary of the Health & Human Service Employees Union, SEIU/1199 and played a key role in many

of the union’s early victories.

In 1979, he founded Bread and Roses, a nonprofit cultural program that gives workers access to the arts through music and poetry presentations, films, concerts and exhibits at the only permanent union-run art gallery. ☐

COURTESY BREAD AND ROSES



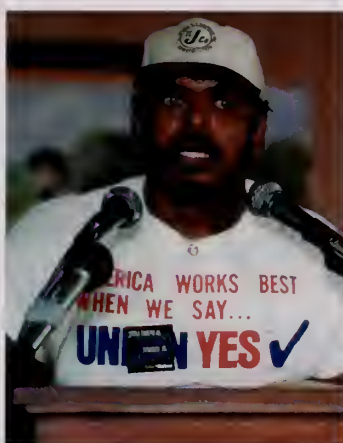
AVONDALE WORKERS RETURN TO WORK

Winning another in a string of victories, Avondale Industries shipyard workers in New Orleans who had been fired unfairly for union activities are back on the job following successful legal negotiations in December.

The National Labor Relations Board approved a settlement between the New Orleans Metal Trades Council and Northrop Grumman, which now owns the shipyard, that reinstates 54 workers, with full back pay, who were fired illegally for union activities. The back pay amounts to \$2.15 million.

The agreement also "expunges the records of scores of other employees who were illegally

JACKSON HILL/SOUTHERN LIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHY



Back at work: Donald Varnado wins justice and his job.

sanctioned, suspended or otherwise disciplined for their union activities," says AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department President John Meese. @

Workers Under Attack

In a continuing assault on working families, the Bush administration took steps to weaken workers' unions and maneuvered around Congress to appoint a staunch opponent of ergonomics protections to the top legal post at the U.S. Department of Labor.

On Jan. 11, President George W. Bush appointed Eugene Scalia, who made his mark fighting ergonomics and other worker protections, to be the Labor Department solicitor of labor. With Congress out of session, Bush used a "recess" appointment because Scalia's nomination had drawn intense congressional fire and was in jeopardy.

Earlier in the month, Bush issued an executive order that revoked union representation for hundreds of workers in five Department of Justice offices involved in law enforcement, intelligence and investigations. The White House claimed the action would prevent strikes by federal workers engaged in the

war on terrorism—but current law already precludes those workers from striking.

Bush also fired the seven-member Federal Service Impasses Panel, which, because federal workers do not have the right to strike, either seeks a compromise or imposes a settlement.

Bush named four individuals to the FSIP, including Becky Norton Dunlop of the ultraconservative think tank Heritage Foundation, as chairperson.

In two good moves, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia threw out Bush's 2001 anti-worker executive order that required employers to post notices telling workers about their rights to avoid paying their fair share of union dues but didn't advise them of their rights to join a union and overturned Bush's executive order banning project labor agreements, which set wages and work rules on large public construction projects. @

OUT FRONT

The multifront investigation into the catastrophic collapse of Enron Corp. almost surely will unearth ties to self-interested executives, directors, auditors, analysts and politicians. But Enron's meltdown, which cost thousands of its employees their jobs and retirement savings and affected millions of other large and small investors, had another significant contributing factor as well: the culture of corporate greed and disregard for working people that has been accepted—and in some cases abetted—by too many government leaders.

Enron's collapse is symptomatic of a cancer attacking the well-being of working families across this country and the world. This cultural corruption allowed rich executives to sell their Enron stocks and run while locking employees' life savings in steerage as they piloted the company into the rocks. It allowed this company to legally avoid paying anything like a fair share in taxes and to invest the money saved in a stunning array of questionable practices.

It's the same illness that allows America's workers—heralded as heroes in the recovery from Sept. 11—to lack adequate government help with income, food and health care for their families when they were laid off or lost hours from work following the terrorist attacks (see page 8).

It's the sickness that weakens our democracy by allowing corporate money and influence in politics to drown out working families' voices.

It's the same disease that allows corporations to devastate entire communities by moving jobs to countries where they can abuse workers with intolerable wages and working conditions. The disease that allows our wealthy nation to trade with countries that exploit child labor, bar religious freedom and sell the work of political prisoners.

This sickness in our culture has been fed by the corporate agenda shared by the Bush administration (see www.aflcio.org/bushwatch), which consistently places the base wants of CEOs and Big Business ahead of the basic needs of working families.

It is imperative that the working people of America join with our brothers and sisters in other countries to restore fairness to our economy and reclaim the moral tradition of our country. This year and every year, our union movement will use every tool and every lesson we've learned in recent years (see pages 13 and 16) to make our government more responsive to the everyday working heroes who build our cities, clean our buildings, fly our planes, drive our trucks, heal our sick and nurture our families.

And workers united must make governments everywhere less responsive to the greed that has been nurtured too well already. @

Enron is a Symptom



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

Pulling Together or Apart?

Hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs in the past few months, yet after years of slashing the nation's critical social safety net, lawmakers have failed to ensure working families receive the health care, food support and unemployment insurance they need to get through tough times

By JANE BIRNBAUM

When Linda Bracey,

a member of the Culinary Workers Union/Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 226 and a room service waitress at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, was laid off Sept. 21 with no notice or severance pay, she rushed to activate what she thought was her safety net: unemployment insurance and food stamps. "Being a single mother of two, I needed all the resources I could get," recalls Bracey, 26, a union shop steward who had worked at the Mirage for more than eight years.

A safety net should sustain workers who lose jobs through no fault of their own and cannot immediately find new ones. But Bracey and her children were forced to stay afloat with the help of family members struggling on low salaries and the United Labor Agency of Nevada, a charity established by a coalition of unions. Her \$700-a-month rent, plus utilities and other modest bills, more than consumed the \$255 after-tax weekly unemployment benefits that didn't start coming until late October. And even that small benefit disqualified her for food stamps.

"What's out there for working people isn't enough at all," says Bracey. "The food stamp program looks at unemployment insurance as income, but it's not—it's just a little bit of money to survive. How are my kids supposed to eat? They would have gone hungry if not for the United Labor Agency, which gave us baskets of food."

Bracey, who volunteered at the United Labor Agency as a way to "help others keep up their courage," was fortunate. The agency found funds to enroll her in computer courses through a state job training program and pay her a wage for her office work. But across the economic spectrum, 1.6 million layoffs have been announced since the recession began in April, according to the management consulting firm Chal-



lenger, Gray and Christmas. And facing a 5.8 percent national unemployment rate, the highest since August 1995, they are finding the nation's traditional safety net—unemployment insurance, health care insurance, welfare and food stamps—is in tatters.

Unemployment insurance: Not filling the bill

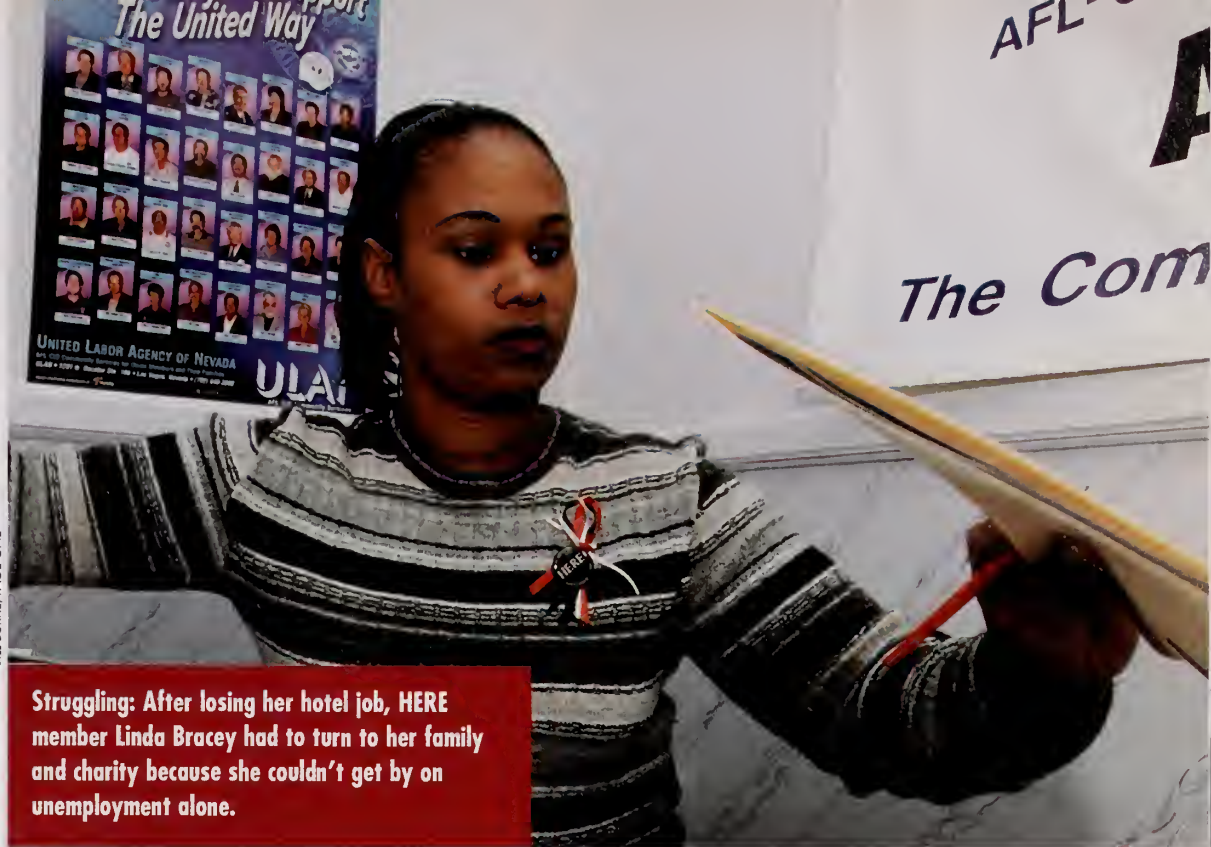
Union leaders and economists who recognize the needs of working families are asking Congress and the Bush administration to take the lead in helping workers regain the support they need to get through hard times. Unemployment insurance should be the first line of defense for laid-off workers, such as hotel employee Bracey, who often take longer than the 26 weeks covered by UI to find employment in a recession.

“Unemployment insurance is a social insurance system, not welfare,” says Nanine Meiklejohn, an AFSCME legislative representative. “Employers pay taxes on each worker, and that money goes into a state benefit trust fund that is supposed to accumulate during good times so it can be spent in bad ones.”

UI keeps workers from destitution, she adds, and helps the economy because workers spend the money quickly, which slows state revenue losses.

States determine the amount of UI benefits workers receive, ranging from a maximum of \$190 weekly in Mississippi to a \$715 weekly maximum for Massachusetts workers with dependents. With benefits based on pre-layoff pay, the working poor, the least likely to have saved up a financial cushion, also receive the lowest UI benefits. Overall, benefits have been dropping—the percentage of lost wages that UI now replaces dropped from 38 percent in 1990 to 33 percent today, according to the Economic

BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE



Struggling: After losing her hotel job, HERE member Linda Bracey had to turn to her family and charity because she couldn't get by on unemployment alone.

Policy Institute. (In 1985, when UI was not yet subject to state and federal taxes, it replaced an average 46 percent of lost wages, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.)

And still, only about 35 percent of Americans currently are eligible to collect unemployment insurance because part-timers, low wage-earners, the newly hired and independent contractors usually don't qualify.

According to EPI economist Jeffrey Wenger, the federal government should not only help states extend UI benefits beyond the normal 26 weeks but also give them enough money to bring more workers into the UI tent.

“Although we commonly speak of the late 1990s as a boom time, in fact many people found themselves forced to take contract jobs without benefits,” says Richard Carney, an AFSCME Local 269 member who referees unemployment insurance appeals

for the Connecticut State Labor Department. “And now when a lot of contract work has evaporated and they can't get unemployment insurance, they have no safety net.”

Spending life savings for health care

Another major piece of the safety net—health care coverage—is critical in a nation where a single health emergency can destroy the finances of an uninsured family. According to a December 2001 Families USA report, 91 percent of non-elderly Americans with health insurance receive it through work or family members' jobs. More than 727,000 workers lost health coverage along with their jobs between March and October 2001, the report says, and that number doesn't include children and other dependents who became uninsured with them.

A Commonwealth Fund study released last December spells out the consequences of living without health insurance. In a survey conducted between April and July 2001, the organization found 27 percent of uninsured respondents and 31 percent of those who had been uninsured during any period in the previous year reported “a significant change in their way of life” to pay medical bills. And for 76 percent of that uninsured group, changing their way of life meant spending most or all of their life savings on health care.

“That's a big concern, losing my life savings because of a hospitalization,” says Waichee Tang, a New York City garment inspector and seamstress in her 50s who



CHRIS FARINA

**“One of our society's
greatest challenges”
is to improve the
“fundamental safety net
for workers in America,
including immigrants.”**

—HERE President John Wilhelm



SHERRY KANE

Risking it all: Laid off from her job, Waichee Tang fears losing her life savings if faced with a medical crisis.

takes daily medication for high blood pressure. Tang, like 2,000 fellow UNITE Local 23-25 members, has been laid off since Sept. 11—without work, their health coverage runs out after six months. Another 5,000 Local 23-25 members on reduced schedules since Sept. 11 also face this time limit if they can't get enough hours.

Tang, who is drawing a \$400 monthly UI benefit, hasn't been able to find a new garment industry job. In November, she paid \$300 for home health care training and certification. "But when I applied for work," she says, "the waiting list was 400 people."

To maintain health coverage after hers has expired, she could continue to receive coverage under the federal COBRA law—which would cost Tang \$184 a month. "Too much," she says. It would cost her even more to join the health plan at the accounting firm where her husband works—and he, too, could be laid off soon, the couple fears.

Local 23-25 Associate Manager May Chen says UNITE has asked the federal government to help finance its health plan while also joining other unions in asking state and federal governments to help workers pay for

COBRA. "If you're unemployed and have no income, you can't afford COBRA," she says.

Tom Snyder, assistant to John Wilhelm, HERE president, concurs: "Whatever meager UI workers get, they'll never be able to pay a portion of that huge COBRA cost." The economic stimulus bill "fell apart in late December when some House Republicans refused to pay for COBRA, which was part of their long-term plan to divorce health care from the workplace."

Too hungry to fight for a better life

Like UI, the federal food stamp program has served as a critical component in ensuring working families literally can survive—while stimulating the economy because people spend food stamps immediately. And just as lawmakers have cut UI on the state level, federal legislators have slashed the food stamp program that federal dollars finance (with the federal and state governments sharing the program's administrative costs).

In tandem with welfare "reform," Congress cut the food stamp program by approximately \$27 billion between 1996 and 2002, contributing to the fact that today four of 10 eligible people are not getting food stamps, according to the nonprofit Food Research and Action Center advocacy group.

"Food is closely related to labor policy," says Michael Wilson, chief lobbyist for the United Food and Commercial Workers. "People who are hungry can't fight to organize or get better wages. When you're hungry, that's the only thing important to you, and the only thing worse is when your children are hungry."

The 1996 cuts are being felt widely for the

first time now because of the recession, says Ellen Vollinger, legal director of FRAC. Even for workers eligible for food stamps, the program erects daunting barriers, she adds, citing a U.S. Department of Agriculture study finding it takes an average of five hours and two visits to the food stamp office to fill out food stamp program applications.

Strengthening welfare-to-work

In 1996, Congress refashioned the nation's 60-year-old welfare support system into Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, a federal welfare-to-work block grant to the states. And with the economy beginning to hum that year, it imposed a five-year lifetime limit on TANF benefits. Furthermore, it required TANF recipients to work as a condition of getting those benefits.

Most TANF recipients could find only low-wage service jobs and scraped by. But with the country in recession, they have been among the first workers cut. With wages too low to qualify for UI, they have been thrown back on TANF, where many now are hitting the program's five-year limit.

Knowing there is no work available, government executives in some states and counties have waived TANF limits, and others may join them if the recession persists. But if states, already struggling to pay for Medicaid health coverage, have to use their own money for TANF extensions, their troubles will only multiply.

"The states are now in economic meltdown," says University of Texas economist and professor James K. Galbraith. "California, for instance, is facing what may reach a \$20 billion budget shortfall. When you have a recession and massive unemployment increases, no state or city should endanger their safety nets and jobs by cutting social services such as Medicaid or raising taxes. In times like these, states need to expand their activities, and the federal government should be shoveling money at them so they can."

According to EPI economist Max Sawicky, states "may be forced to choose between cutting services such as law enforcement, education, environmental protection and health care and raising taxes. Unfortunately, any of these choices would multiply the damage from the recession."

The Bush administration's reluctance to share federal revenue with the states is symptomatic of the agenda it shares with



KRAIG SCATARELLA

Catch-22: Welfare community coordinator John Filar says staff cuts make it hard to serve the growing number of working families who need support.



CHRIS FARINA

**The federal government
“needs to step in and
fix our frayed safety
net” because workers
can’t depend upon the
vagaries of private-
sector philanthropy.**

—Fire Fighters President
Harold Schaitberger

Big Business to shift many government and employer responsibilities and risks, such as providing health insurance and retirement benefits to the private sector and working families. Although firefighters’ families received “an unprecedented outpouring of financial support from everyday Americans,” says Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger, working families cannot depend upon the private sector.

“The federal government needs to step in and fix our frayed safety net by putting dollars in the pockets of working families through mechanisms such as extended unemployment insurance and payment for health care coverage,” he says. “Not only will such federal support keep working families from financial disaster, it will provide a genuine stimulus to the economy when those dollars are immediately spent.”

Wilhelm, president of HERE, which has seen nearly one-third—80,000—of its members lose jobs in the weeks after Sept. 11, says, “One of our society’s greatest challenges as we enter the new millennium is to patch and improve our fundamental safety net for workers in America, including immigrants.”

Many newly unemployed hotel and restaurant employees are tax-paying, undocumented immigrants who by law cannot collect employment insurance benefits. Even documented tax-paying immigrants face severe barriers to obtaining federal services such as food stamps, Medicaid health coverage and TANF benefits. (For a full checklist in English and Spanish of benefits available to immigrants both documented and undocumented, read the Working for America Institute’s Layoff Survival Kit at www.workingforamerica.org.)

This year, restoring TANF benefits to immigrants should be one of welfare’s primary reforms, according to Deepak Bhar-

gava, director of the nonprofit National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support. The AFL-CIO supports restoring benefits to immigrants as well as the group’s other recommendations: a new TANF public jobs program for parents in high unemployment areas or with limited work experience and stopping the time clock for recipients in compliance with TANF program requirements and making exceptions to TANF’s work requirement for parents with young children or children with disabilities or illness.

Meanwhile, workers who help those in need are struggling themselves: “It’s the old Catch-22” says SEIU Local 503 member John Filar, a welfare community coordinator for Oregon’s Multnomah County, which includes Portland. “We need more resources to help more people coming through the door, but our staff is being cut because of state budget reductions.” Applicants include laid-off welfare-to-work TANF recipients who were too poorly paid to qualify for unemployment insurance, and workers whose UI benefits have run out before they can find new jobs.

Pulling together or apart

While the social safety net America’s workers traditionally have relied on to get through hard times—health care, social services, unemployment insurance and food stamps—is inadequate to provide sufficient support for a struggling family, the House has approved two massive sets of tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy in the past year.

In late December, for instance, the economic stimulus package approved by the House gave corporations tax rollbacks officially worth a total of \$24 billion over 10 years, and more likely two or three times that much thanks to increased tax sheltering, according to the nonprofit Citizens for

Tax Justice. And, according to CTJ, more than \$7 billion of that \$24 billion would go to just 16 Fortune 500 companies, including IBM (the top recipient at \$1.4 billion), General Electric and ChevronTexaco.

“Historically, we’ve always intervened to support our most vulnerable,” says economist Galbraith. “We did it in World War II, in the 1960s and in 1935, when the Social Security Act created the beginning of the safety net we know today. If we have a severe recession, which is likely, clearly the right thing to do is to go back to that experience when the public instinct to help was correct, and to reanimate that instinct.”

“We are in a recession during a time of national crisis,” he says. “When you’re asking a country to pull together, it’s especially unreasonable to dump the burden on the poorest and weakest people.” ☐

Retirement at Risk

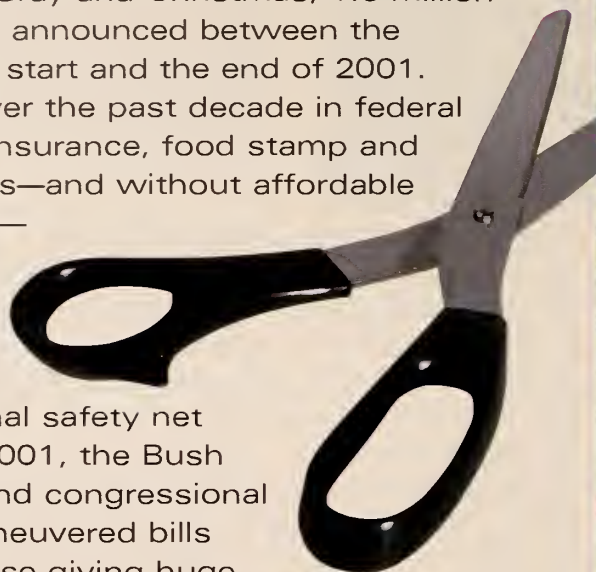
Workers increasingly realize a secure retirement may not be in their future as more employers shift from providing pension plans with defined benefits, in which employees are guaranteed a specific sum each year following retirement, to 401(k) accounts, whose returns depend upon the stock market. Contrary to sound financial planning, employers and even workers often load 401(k)s with company stock, says Economic Policy Institute economist Christian Weller.

The risk of this practice has been demonstrated by the plight of workers for Enron Corp., a bankrupt energy trading company whose executives were prominent contributors to the George W. Bush presidential campaign. With Enron’s stock price plunging from more than \$80 to less than \$1 a share, many workers lost their life savings and now have only Social Security.

“Workers face this danger when their retirement depends on the stock market,” says Roger Hickey, co-director of the Campaign for America’s Future. “That’s why Social Security is critical—for many Americans, it’s the only defined-benefit plan they can depend on. Enron has proven we cannot risk privatizing it.” ☐

No Support for the Nation's Workers

According to the management consulting firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas, 1.6 million layoffs were announced between the recession's April start and the end of 2001. But with cuts over the past decade in federal unemployment insurance, food stamp and welfare programs—and without affordable health insurance—working families who have lost their jobs are finding the nation's traditional safety net is in tatters. In 2001, the Bush administration and congressional Republicans maneuvered bills through the House giving huge tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy—while refusing to pass an economic stimulus package to help repair the safety net that working families desperately need.



Fewer Eligible Workers Receive Food Stamps

Ten States With the Steepest Five-Year Declines in Food Stamp Program Participation

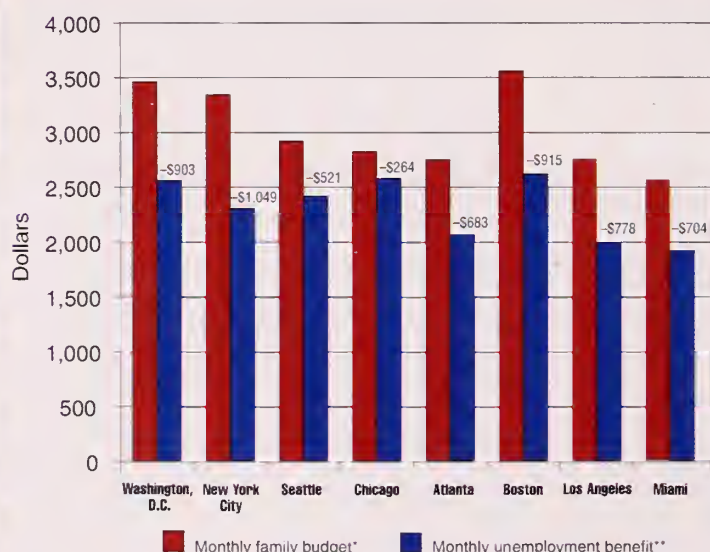
State	June 1996	June 2001	% Change Over 5 Years, June 1996–June 2001
1. California	3,128,369	1,638,987	-47.6%
2. Delaware	57,850	31,930	-44.8%
3. Maryland	371,249	208,732	-43.8%
4. New Jersey	539,321	315,412	-41.5%
5. Texas	2,307,335	1,368,900	-40.7%
6. Massachusetts	368,988	219,074	-40.6%
7. Virginia	529,286	327,725	-38.1%
8. Ohio	1,035,321	649,113	-37.3%
9. New York	2,091,484	1,332,084	-36.3%
10. Colorado	240,006	154,360	-35.7%

Four of 10 eligible workers are not taking part in the federal food stamp program because of barriers to access, according to the nonprofit Food Research and Action Center.

Source: Food Research and Action Center, using federal Food and Nutrition Service data

Families Can't Make It on Unemployment

Gap between UI Benefits and Basic Family Budget, by Selected Metropolitan Areas



*Two-parent, two-child family; with unemployed parent previously earning full-time median wage and still-employed spouse working part-time (20 hours per week) at median wage.

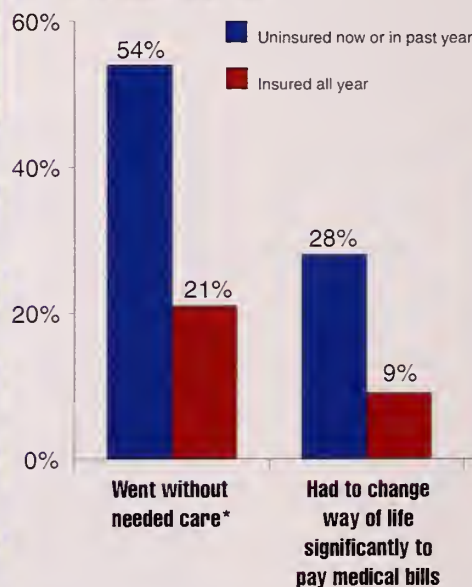
**UI benefits calculated using median earnings.

Source: Economic Policy Institute

Health Insurance Loss Can Devastate Workers

Care Gaps and Financial Impact of Losing Health Insurance

Percent of adults who were:



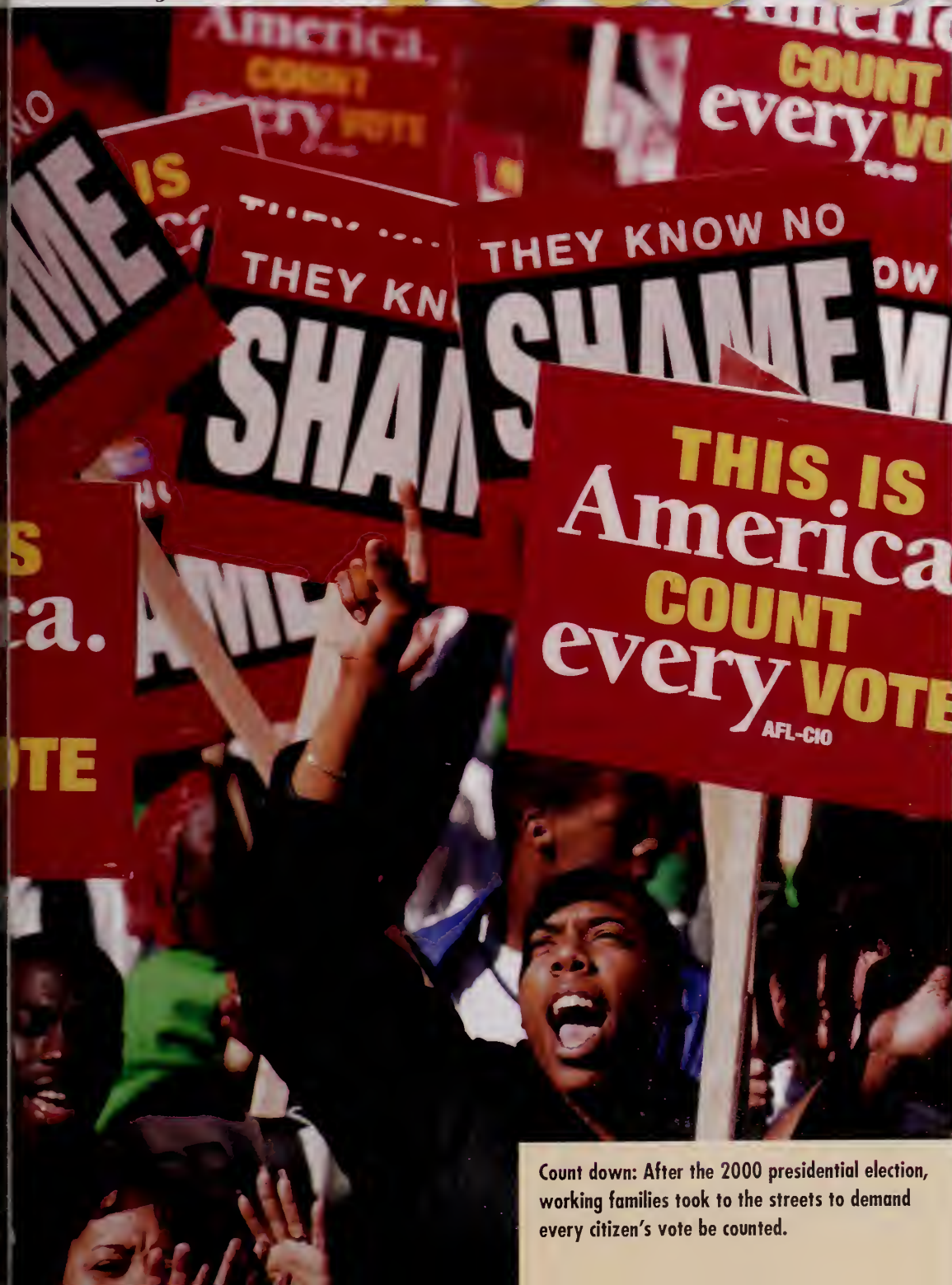
A lack of health coverage for even a short time threatens the health and economic security of one in four working-age Americans.

*Did not see a doctor when sick, see a specialist when needed, fill a prescription or get recommended tests or treatment because of cost.

Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2001 Health Insurance Survey

Making Every Vote Count

By JAMES B. PARKS



With Election Day 2002 only nine months away, the union movement and its civil rights allies are pushing for long-delayed comprehensive election reform legislation in Congress to prevent a repeat of the debacle of 2000, when millions of U.S. citizens were denied the right to have their votes counted.

"Voting is at the core of our democracy," says Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), a coalition of more than 185 national organizations, including the AFL-CIO and many affiliated unions. "Congress has an obligation to ensure that voting is fair and accurate for all. Americans are rightly concerned about the new challenges facing our democracy."

Delegates to the 24th AFL-CIO Convention in Las Vegas overwhelmingly supported far-reaching election reform, calling for an election system in which the fundamental right to vote is guaranteed to every citizen, regardless of income, education or political experience.

"Election reform is the civil rights issue of 2002," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who chairs the Executive Council's Committee on Civil and Human Rights. "Voting is the most fundamental right we have. If that is not safe, then none of our civil rights is safe."

Senate bill better than the House Sens. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Christopher Bond (R-Mo.), Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and

Count down: After the 2000 presidential election, working families took to the streets to demand every citizen's vote be counted.

Front lines: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka (second from left), joins the Rev. Joseph Lowery, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume and AFSCME President Gerald McEntee marching for a full vote count in the 2000 election.



MIKE EVEN

Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) introduced comprehensive election reform legislation establishing important minimum national standards. Beginning in 2004, voters whose names do not appear on official voter lists would be allowed to cast a provisional ballot that would be counted if their registration is verified later. States would be required to set up computerized statewide voter registration lists linked to local polling places by 2004. And by 2006, states and local governments would have to establish systems enabling voters to verify their ballots to correct any errors, install machines in each polling place for voters with disabilities and offer ballots and voting materials for those who do not speak English.

The House of Representatives passed its version of election reform Dec. 12, the first anniversary of *Bush vs. Gore*—the Supreme Court ruling halting the Florida recount, disenfranchising thousands of mostly minority and elderly voters and handing the White House to George W. Bush.

The House version, sponsored by Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Bob Ney (R-Ohio), does not go far enough in protecting the rights of voters, says Barbara Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. It does not require that all states use new voting machine technology that notifies voters of over- or undervotes and that makes the machines accessible to people with disabilities and those who don't speak English. It also fails to ensure that all states allow registered voters whose names are not found on official voter lists, to cast provisional ballots.

"The House bill simply fails to address the grave problems so many Americans faced in the 2000 elections," says Arnwine. "Among other elements, comprehensive reform must ensure that all voters are notified of and given the opportunity to cast provisional ballots, and are informed of their rights under state and federal law."

Denied the right to vote

The severe problems with the nation's voting system became glaringly apparent in the 2000 presidential election. In Florida, thousands of votes were not counted, with voters denied their right to vote.

When Jewel Littenberg voted at her Palm Beach County, Fla., polling place in the 2000 election, she says the ballot was so confusing she never has been sure for whom she voted.

The two-page ballot had the familiar arrows pointing to candidates' names found

on many punch cards used around the country and a place to punch in a vote. But the punch holes and the names were not aligned, making it difficult to tell which candidate went with which punch.

"The way the ballot lined up, if I punched the hole across from Al Gore's name, then it looked like I was voting for Pat Buchanan," says Littenberg. "The ballot was a mess," says the 63-year-old resident of Atlantis, Fla. "I cannot imagine how anyone could have come up with this—it's the most confusing thing I've ever seen."

Many of her elderly neighbors had problems understanding the ballot, she says, and they flooded the state elections board's complaint line with calls about the confusing ballot. Because the ballots were so confusing, some were punched twice—and were thrown out.

"The fact that our votes didn't count is a slap in the face to all our civil rights and it sets a bad example for the world and our children," Littenberg says.

Thousands of working families throughout Florida and across the country rallied in the weeks after the 2000 election to send the message that "This Is America. Count Every Vote." Unions, civil rights and women's groups and community leaders called for a fair and accurate count of the presidential votes. They urged officials to investigate reports that voters, especially African Americans and Haitians, were turned away at the polls because they were told they were ineligible to vote, erro-

JOSHUA PREZANT



LEN KAMINSKY

A right to vote: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson (inset) joined the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and tens of thousands of other allies during January Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations in Miami.

neously told polling places had closed and otherwise denied the right to vote.

A recent investigation by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the National Commission on Federal Election Reform found voting problems throughout the country, but especially in Florida, where 20 percent of ballots in the 2000 election were spoiled or unreadable.

"The voting system in Florida failed to accurately capture the preferences of hundreds of thousands of voters, and that burden fell disproportionately on African Americans," Christopher Edley, a member of the USCCR, told the AFL-CIO Civil and Human Rights Conference in December.

The importance of a fair voting system was illustrated dramatically in a study commissioned by a consortium of major newspapers, including *The Washington Post*. An independent research group meticulously compiled a database of every uncounted Florida ballot and found that had every vote been counted, Vice-President Al Gore would have won Florida balloting and the presidency. To read the report, visit www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/orl-recount.storygallery.

While the repercussions of the Florida disaster reverberated on a national scale, U.S. citizens were denied the right to vote in locales across the country. In Fort Stockton, Texas, minority voters, many of whom cast their votes by mail, say local election officials sent uniformed officers to voters' homes, forcing them to say which candidate they voted for and subpoenaing the primarily elderly Latino voters to appear for interviews 80 miles from their homes.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund is working on the case. Because of the intimidation, says Marisa Demeo, MALDEF's regional counsel, "many said they would not vote again."

A recent study by the California Institute of Technology/Massachusetts Institute of Technology Voting Technology Project found that compared to the presidential race, far more votes were cast but not counted in U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races. In those elections, up to 3.5 million votes went uncounted in November 2000.

Only Florida, Georgia and Maryland enacted comprehensive voting reforms in 2001. Each of these states strengthened voter rights, mandated the use of the most



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Election reform: At the AFL-CIO Civil and Human Rights Conference in December, Coalition of Labor Union Women President Gloria Johnson (center) and other participants discuss ways to make every vote count.

Restoring the Right to Vote

In passing Resolution 8: One Nation, Indivisible, With Liberty and Justice for All, delegates to the 2001 AFL-CIO Convention called for preserving affirmative action, eliminating all forms of discrimination and ending racial profiling. The resolution also backs election reform based on four basic principles:

1. Voter registration should be simple, uncomplicated and designed to encourage voting through universal registration at age 18 and same-day registration and voting.
2. Voting should be easy and certain. Instead of limiting voting hours, delegates urge election officials to extend voting hours, establish multiday or weekend elections or create a national Election Day holiday. Voters should be able to cast provisional ballots if their names do not appear on registration lists. And voting machines should be accessible to people with disabilities.
3. To ensure every vote is counted, a common ballot format should be provided in federal elections along with standardized nationwide voting technology and legislated consistency about recount procedures.
4. Voting rights must be enforced aggressively, with penalties strong enough to deter violations. ☐

modern voting technology and improved training for Election Day.

The AFL-CIO is assisting state federations to lobby legislators to pass the Voting Reform Act, a model bill that combines the best voting reform practices already adopted in Maryland, Georgia and Florida. The act would ensure that every vote counts by requiring local election officials to post a voters' bill of rights at every polling place. It also calls for replacing obsolete equipment with precinct-based optical scanners or touch screen monitors and designating uniform ballot designs.

The AFL-CIO's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration Jan. 18–21 in Miami highlighted the need for voting rights and political participation.

"Dr. King recognized both the symbolic value and practical power of the vote," says UNITE Vice President Clayola Brown, co-chair of the King Day events. "The vote is the great equalizer. Each person—no

matter how rich or poor—gets only one vote. Unfortunately, the election system in this country has been stacked against the poor, the uneducated and immigrants—and that must be changed."

More than 100,000 activists rallied in Miami in support of voting rights, hearing from union and civil rights activists involved in the effort to gain an accurate vote count in Florida in 2000.

"At a time when America's values are under attack by terrorists, we must be especially vigilant to make sure that all our rights are protected," Chavez-Thompson says. "There is no right more sacred than the right to vote." ☐

Urge your senator to vote for comprehensive election reform by visiting www.aflcio.org/reform. For more information on state election reform legislation, call Naomi Walker in the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department at 202-637-5093.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

IN THE 2001 ELECTIONS, UNION ACTIVISTS PUT IN MOTION PROVEN GRASSROOTS STRATEGIES THAT COULD SERVE AS VALUABLE GUIDES IN THIS YEAR'S CRITICAL RACES BY MIKE HALL

Without the spotlight of a presidential race or battle for control of Congress, last fall's off-year elections generated little national interest. But less glamorous battles for municipal and state offices—in New Jersey, Cleveland and King County, Wash., for example—provided unions with political strategies that will prove valuable in this year's congressional, gubernatorial and other major election battles.

How They Did It

Cleveland Mobilizing around a Workers' Bill of Rights

With a Workers' Bill of Rights as the centerpiece of mobilization for Cleveland's 2001 elections, working families and their unions elected as mayor Jane Campbell, a state lawmaker with a long pro-working family record, and 18 of 20 union-endorsed city council candidates.

"We told the candidates, 'If you give us a stronger commitment by signing the Workers' Bill of Rights, we'll give you a stronger commitment,'" says John Ryan, executive secretary of the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation of Labor.

Tying the Cleveland council's support for a candidate to such support for workers' rights is a fundamental element of the

AFL-CIO's initiative to encourage central labor councils and state federations to link politics to organizing.

Because "politics is a year-round battle," says Ryan, the council retained a planning group that had helped win an earlier bond issue to repair and rebuild city schools, and in May 2000 the council was ready to mobilize rapidly for the mayoral and city council elections.

"We spent a long time developing a Workers' Bill of Rights and sent it out to the candidates," Ryan says. Signing the document did not result in an automatic endorsement—union members also considered previous records and electability of candidates.

The Workers' Bill of Rights committed candidates to supporting card-check recognition and participation in organizing drives; halting privatization of city services and bringing back services performed by outside contractors; strong enforcement of the city's living wage law; expanding health care coverage for children and working parents; and ending payment of public funds to employers who fight against workers seeking a voice on the job.

Nine of the 10 mayoral candidates signed the pledge before

the September primary, as did most city council candidates. At several forums, workers asked mayoral hopefuls specific questions about how they would implement goals outlined in the bill of rights.

Following more than 56,000 telephone calls from union volunteers to union members, 72,000 pieces of informational material mailed from local unions and "Labor-Neighbor" precinct walks by some 600 union volunteers, Campbell and 18 working family-backed city council candidates took the oath of office Jan. 5.

On election night, Campbell acknowl-





ATLANTA LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

Outreach: The Atlanta Labor Council mobilized union members and worked with the city's civil rights and other community groups to elect Shirley Franklin mayor (above).

edged the importance of the working families mobilization. "I would not be here without you," she said.

How They Did It

Washington State Multiunion strategies for success

Union activists reached success in two battles in Washington State, with the King County Labor Council tying organizing and bargaining concerns to the election of a port commissioner and union activists across the state working in coalition to support an initiative that will improve the quality of home health care for the state's seniors and give the 15,000 home care workers the right to a voice at work.

The three-member King County Port Commission operates the massive dockside port operations and the Sea-Tac International Airport, and its actions directly affect

thousands of workers. Lately, says Steve Williamson, executive secretary-treasurer of the King County Labor Council, those decisions have not been working family-friendly—allowing privatization of crane and crane maintenance operations, work done for the past 50 years by union port employees, and leaving most of the 28 collective bargaining agreements covering the port's 850 union workers open.

Hundreds of Machinists, Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees members, Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers and SEIU members work at Sea-Tac under a master agreement outlining general working conditions, workers' rights, training and promotional opportunities and their own union-specific pacts. The Port Commission was exploring ways to weaken or eliminate those agreements and had done little to guarantee the right to a voice at work for more than 1,000 airline-contracted employees.

To get the commission candidates on record, the port unions and the labor council developed a thorough questionnaire that delved into the organizing and bargaining issues, then invited candidates to a public forum where the answers would determine who would win unions' help, explains labor council Political Director Adair Dammann.

"We wanted a real commitment to our issues," Williamson says.

Following the forum, the council's unions

endorsed a challenger, Lawrence Molloy, in a race against 28-year incumbent and former union member Jack Block, who had won union backing in previous races but drew fire for his stances on contracting-out, privatization and the commission's role in holding airport contractors accountable.

The next step was getting the word out beyond the port unions. The council sent letters to all affiliates explaining the issues and urging member mobilization for the port commission race.

Between the September endorsement and the November election, some 200 union volunteers from the labor council's 42 affiliated unions made more than 5,000 phone calls to union households, knocked on 2,000 union doors and in the final four days of the campaign dropped pieces of get-out-the-vote literature at 6,600 union homes.

That massive mobilization effort secured a seat on the Port Commission for Molloy by more than 3,000 votes—mostly union votes, according to local political observers.

In the home care initiative, unions and other groups worked hard to make the public aware of just how many seniors rely on home care workers to live independently



JOHN RYAN

ers' Bill of Rights: Cleveland activists made a Workers' Rights the centerpiece of 2001 political mobilization efforts, electing Jane Campbell (p. 16, red jacket) as mayor and 8 of 20 union-endorsed city council candidates.

and of the low pay and lack of a voice at work that fuels turnover.

The initiative, I-775, which passed with a 63 percent majority, creates a caregiver registry so families have a way to find qualified home care workers. It improves training, raises standards for home care workers and addresses the caregiver shortage by allowing home care workers to negotiate for a living wage and decent benefits.

How They Did It

Atlanta Coalition-building for ballot box victory

The Atlanta Labor Council mobilized union members and worked with the city's civil rights and other community groups to put working family-friendly Shirley Franklin in the mayor's office. Now, says labor council President Charlie Flemming, those groups are building a permanent political relationship.

When Shirley Franklin announced she was running for mayor of Atlanta in early 2001, polls showed her 40 points behind the better-known front-runner in the non-partisan, three-person battle.

"Shirley Franklin had never run for office before, but she was somebody who excited us," recalls Flemming.

In the early and mid-1990s, Franklin had served as the city's chief administrative officer, similar to a city manager, under two working family-friendly administrations. She was instrumental in ensuring union workers got a fair share of the 1996 Olympics construction work, fought for

prevailing wage rules for the project and stood up for Atlanta's municipal workers.

To make sure working families knew Franklin stood with them on the issues, Franklin attended union and central labor council meetings, and union activists solidified support through member-to-member worksite contacts, phone calls,

mailings and door-to-door visits.

At the same time, the labor council joined with Atlanta's other progressive groups such as the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda, headed by the Rev. Joseph Lowery, to register more than 10,000 new voters and mobilizing support among the Georgia Stonewall Democrats and other gay and lesbian groups and Up and Out, a coalition of anti-poverty groups.

Franklin won the three-way race by 200 votes, and Flemming says working families already are seeing results—a mayor-elect who has promised to sign a living wage ordinance and created two union spots on her transition team. And with \$8 billion in airport construction slated for the next several years, Atlanta's union leaders believe Franklin—as she did on the Olympics project—will make sure working families have the opportunity to secure the well-paying jobs the construction will create.

"We've strengthened our ties to some of our old friends in the community and built some new relationships. This kind of political organization can only help all of us in the long run," Flemming says.

STATEWIDE SUCCESS IN NEW JERSEY

In one of only two states whose legislature and governorship were at stake in 2001, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO put its highly efficient worker-voter strategy to work. The federation registered record numbers of union voters, who helped elect working family-friendly Jim McGreevey (D) to the governorship by a 300,000-vote margin and sent 29 more union members to public office around the Garden State.

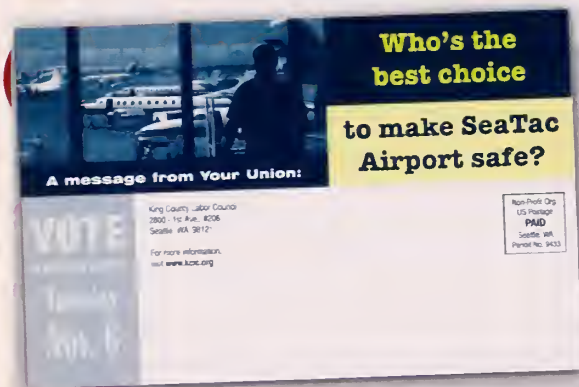
Since the state federation began its strong emphasis on voter registration and electing union members in 1997, more than 250,000 new union voters have been added to the rolls and 159 union members have been elected to office, says New Jersey federation President Charles Wowkanech.

Union activists' get-out-the-vote drive, which connected more than 10,000 union members with voters on Election Day, was the largest GOTV mobilization ever undertaken in the state, a feat recognized by the state's Division of Elections, which honored the federation for registering more new voters in 2001 than any other organization.

Wowkanech characterized the GOTV effort as "an enthusiastic mobilization. We distributed millions of worksite leaflets, contacted members by phone and labor walks and sent educational mail to our members."



GOTV: The New Jersey State AFL-CIO, which has added more than 250,000 new union voters to the rolls since 1997, mobilized union members last fall to elect Gov. Jim McGreevey.



10 STEPS TO POLITICAL ACTION

- **Link** politics to organizing, reinforcing the freedom to choose a union.
- **Assign** a coordinator for each local and each workplace.
- **Distribute** more than one leaflet a month in each workplace.
- **Maximize** member contact through union publications.
- **Include** leaflets and materials in all communication from local union presidents.
- **Incorporate** issue information into routine phone calls.
- **Maintain** an up-to-date membership list.
- **Increase** member registration by at least 10 percent.
- **Spearhead** massive get-out-the-vote efforts.
- **Build** a rapid response network in the workplace.

Working Families Network

Building online power for real-time action

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

SHOWERING LAWMAKERS

with a blizzard of e-mails and faxes, California union activists in October persuaded the state legislature to pass and the governor to sign legislation increasing unemployment insurance benefits. The California Labor Federation deployed its Internet Action Center for the campaign, which enabled activists to send more than 400 e-mails and faxes to their state legislators.

California's union leaders are at the forefront of harnessing the power of e-mail and the Internet to help working families win important victories and build solidarity. As more unionists gain access to computers and electronic communications, the evidence is mounting that Internet activism—combined with one-on-one worksite contact, phone banking and other grassroots mobilization—works to win real victories for working families. Building on past successes and envisioning an ever-more-wired future, the AFL-CIO has launched the Working Families Network, a powerful Internet-based e-mail system to help union activists get the word out about political, legislative and organizing campaigns. California leaders used the

same software for their campaigns. The network is part of a growing toolbox of high-tech tactics, including Web-based fliers and e-mail listservs, that activists are integrating into their campaigns.

An astonishing 70 percent of union members now are online, according to recent AFL-CIO surveys. Chris Garlock, mobilization coordinator for the Metropolitan Washington (D.C.) Council, who publishes a popular e-mail newsletter for more than 5,000 subscribers, says the phenomenon is widespread. "To those union leaders who say, 'My members don't have e-mail,' I say, 'More union members have e-mail than we think, and in five years, everyone will have e-mail.'" Eighty percent of Internet users list e-mail as the main reason they go online, according to Seth Godin in his book *Permission Marketing*. Godin also found e-mail is the most popular online activity for more than half of Internet users—they check their e-mail before they do anything else on the Internet.

And people who use the Internet love it. Some 78 percent of Internet users prefer to be contacted by e-mail, according to Doubleclick, a high-tech communications

Here's How It Works

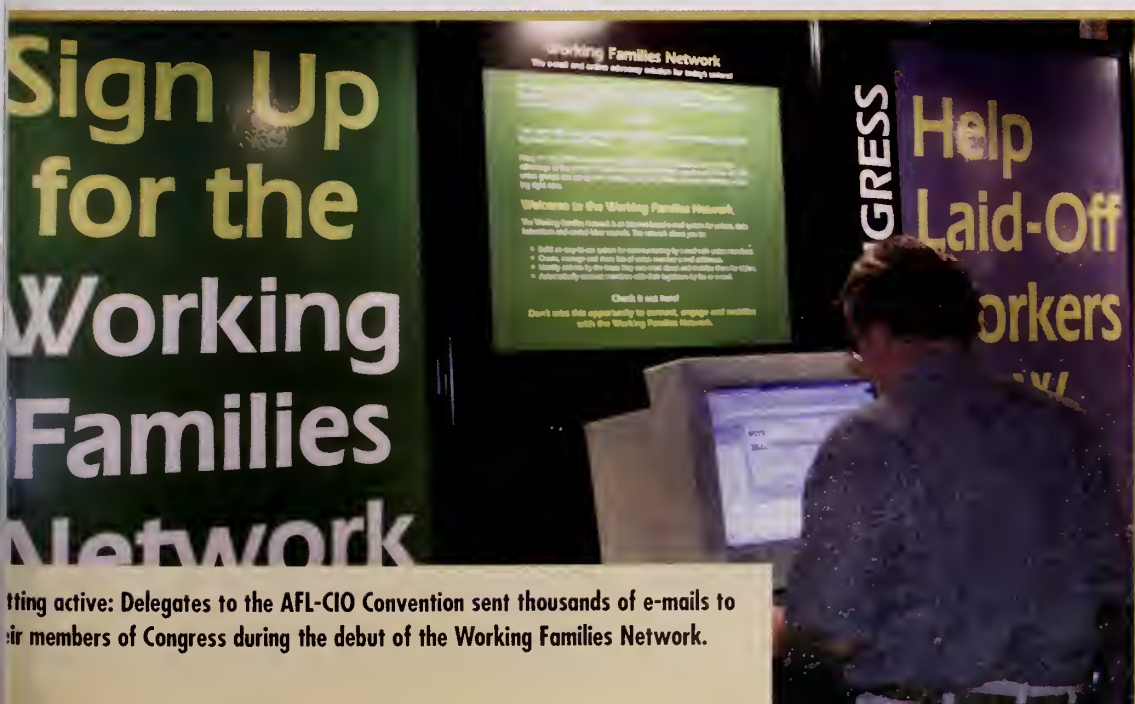
The AFL-CIO Working Families Network enables activists to:

- Collect, manage and share large lists of activists easily and automatically.
- Sort activists by political district at every level of government.
- Sort and target activists by interest and level of activism.
- Track responses to e-mail alerts.
- Test different messages with small groups of activists before sending an alert to an entire list.
- Allow activists to customize faxes and e-mails to decision makers. @

firm, compared with 17 percent who prefer traditional mail. Those who receive e-mail read it and respond, and organizations, such as unions, that send e-mails benefit from its advantages: E-mail is the fastest, most easily personalized and most cost-effective way to contact and mobilize members, with recipients responding quickly to calls for action at far higher rates than if contacted through conventional mail.

Getting active with the Working Families Network

The Working Families Network enables union leaders to deploy a simple, Web-based system to mobilize for action online and off. The system is available to unions, state federations and central labor councils, providing a streamlined method for leaders to manage lists of activists. As union members sign up to become e-activists on a union website, the program automatically sorts them according to their legislative district—from U.S. Congress to state lawmaker—and offers activists the oppor-



Getting active: Delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention sent thousands of e-mails to their members of Congress during the debut of the Working Families Network.

CHRIS FARINA

tunity to receive information about issues of interest. Activists receive e-mails alerting them to rallies or other events and enabling them to send faxes or make phone calls to their legislators and other decision makers.

"It's a terrific mobilization tool," says Garlock, who plans to use the Working Families Network to expand and improve the labor council's e-mail newsletter. "It's not about technology, it's about getting active."

Union members are flocking to the opportunity to get active in this new way. Diana Cooper Harris, a member of Operating Engineers Local 3 in a rural Northern California county, says e-activism through the Working Families Network has proved essential for mobilizing union members. "As a single mother who works full-time,

**"It's a terrific
mobilization tool.
It's not about
technology, it's
about getting active."**

I was happy to discover the Internet Action Center," she says. "It's important for all workers to be politically active, and not everyone can drive to Sacramento or even attend district hearings." With the state federation's Internet Action Center, says Harris, "I can keep informed and take direct action on important issues."

When the AFL-CIO launched the Working Families Network in December during the federation's Convention, delegates sent nearly 5,000 faxes and e-mails to Congress on a variety of issues. And in an early preview of the effectiveness of e-activism, in 2000, when members of Screen Actors and Television and Radio Artists went on strike against advertisers, union leaders sent 12,000 e-mails to activists, asking them to e-mail the chief executive officer of Procter & Gamble Co. Activists generated 20,000

e-mails to CEO Alan Lafley, an influential figure in the strike. The response rate of better than 100 percent shows how e-activism can multiply workers' strength because activists so easily can forward e-mails to others and post notices on websites.

More e-tools for mobilizing members

In addition to the Working Families Network, union activists are bolstering organizing and political campaigns with other online tools, including customized fliers. Led by the New Jersey State AFL-CIO, more than 100 local union leaders in the Garden State distributed 2.5 million workplace fliers during the 2001 gubernatorial election, helping catapult Democrat Jim McGreevey to victory. The ability to customize the fliers is a key element of their success, says Charles Wowkanech, state federation president. "It's more effective because members have pride in their local and they focus more on the message," he says. "Members can relate to the guy they see at their union meetings once a month," agrees Roy Foster, business agent for Electrical Workers Local 351.

Where workplace leafleting is possible, advanced technology is helping leaders update and simplify. With the AFL-CIO's Working Families Toolkit at www.aflcio.org/workingfamielstoolkit/index.htm, union leaders have customized and downloaded thousands of workplace fliers to educate union members about political candidates and working family issues. The password-protected website enables union leaders to include their affiliates' logos, officers' names and other tailored information on ready-to-use fliers—without the hassle of starting from scratch.

Union leaders who already use e-mail and the Web as part of their campaigns say the Working Families Network will ease the way for those integrating technology into their campaigns for the first time. Chris Zic, membership development director at the National Writers Union/UAW Local 1981, says his organization's e-mail network was "a sort of mom-and-pop, homemade operation." For example, he says, "We could tell people to contact their Congressperson, but we couldn't tell them who their Congressperson was." Now, the Working Families Network not only automatically routes faxes and e-mails to members' representatives but also can send messages mobilizing

members in targeted legislative districts. "If a lawmaker is on a key U.S. Senate committee, it is much more effective to get a message from their district," says Zic.

In Washington, D.C., in addition to the labor council's successful 5,000-member e-mail network, the council e-mails a list of rallies and other events to activists, reporters and elected officials, as well as a popular listing of job opportunities twice weekly. "But the logistics of maintaining an e-list is daunting," says Garlock. "Affiliates want to have their members join our list and start their own, but most don't have the staff to build and maintain that kind of operation," he says. Now, as the D.C. labor council deploys its Working Families Network, activists will have



Getting the message: Mobilized by the Washington, D.C. labor council's 5,000-strong listserv, activists testify during a workers' rights board hearing addressing the plight of workers affected in the aftermath of Sept. 11.

access to software that automates and sorts e-mail addresses, freeing union leaders to focus on mapping and implementing campaigns that improve workers' lives and communities.

"Our members are online," says Garlock. "Our challenge is to reach out to our members and engage them."

For more information on the Working Families Network or to sign up, call 202-637-5304. Activists can sign up to receive action alerts by entering their e-mail addresses on www.aflcio.org, where it says "Join the Working Families e-Activist Network for action alerts." @

Outraged at Injustice

Getting young people involved through child labor and sweatshop issues

Last year, as her high school friends headed to Florida beaches or ski slopes in the Adirondacks during New York state's week-long February school break, Rachel Mich packed her bags for Mexico. But she wasn't headed to Cancun or Acapulco. Along with 11 other teens, Mich traveled to Mexican-U.S. border towns such as Rio Bravo, where she saw firsthand the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement, ate with maquiladora workers in their tin-and-crate homes and spoke with children younger than herself who already had spent years in factories.

"I think there's a huge difference between being aware of sweatshop issues—I was aware of that—and going down there and seeing the people and talking to them, especially families who live in garbage dumps and don't have clean water to drink," says Mich, 17, who now sports a Stop Sweatshop sign on her backpack and has changed her career plans from interior design to international relations.

Sponsored by the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition, the 2001 border journey was the organization's first trip for high school and junior high students and included discussions on topics such as NAFTA, visits to *colonias*—border town neighborhoods—and a stop at a grocery store where the group learned the average

weekly salaries of maquila workers aren't sufficient to feed their families.

The coalition, which has sponsored similar delegations for adults since 1997, launched the trip, which will take place again this month, at the suggestion of members of Free the Children, an international youth organization that focuses on child labor, sweatshops and the global economy. Most participants heard of the trip through Free the Children chapters—and all returned to their communities ready to take action: speaking to congregations and community groups about the impact of NAFTA on Mexican workers and their families, launching Free the Children chapters, holding fund-raisers for Mexican school children and writing for their school papers.

But even without international travel, issues of child labor and sweatshops are "a big motivator for kids," says AFT Vice President Paul Cole, who taught 10th-graders for 23 years in western New York. He points to the state's sweatshop poster contest among elementary students as one way union leaders have reached out to educate children about child labor issues—ultimately drawing them into a larger understanding of workers' rights.

"At that age, they get outraged at the injustice. They identify with the kids because they're the same age," says Judy Ancel, direc-



Connecting: Erin Laing, now 13, visited last year with new friends across the border.

tor of the Institute for Labor Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Longview Community College. Ancel has worked with local union leaders through the institute to develop a curriculum for 11th-graders on the global economy, which soon will be available to educators and union leaders seeking to include workers' rights and labor history in school curricula.

Reaching out to young people around global economy issues is "absolutely essential" for union leaders looking to mobilize and create the next generation of leaders, says Steve Watrous, coordinator of the Wisconsin Fair Trade Campaign, a coalition of unions and religious groups that works with young people to organize college-age students in the local United Students Against Sweatshops chapter.

Watrous cites the participation of Wisconsin State AFL-CIO President David Newby in USAS meetings and other student activist events as key to bridging the gap between students and unions.

"Union leadership tends to be older, bigger, whiter guys and some students see themselves as not relating to union guys," says Watrous. "The more contact there is between established leadership and new young activists, the better."

Prior to the maquila trip, neither Mich, nor Alex Kastning, 17, another participant, had a positive or clear understanding of unions: "The media in general give unions a negative image," says Mich.

Now, says Kastning, who spoke to more than two dozen community groups upon her return, "I know unions are needed so badly just to protect the people, and before, I never really thought of them as being necessary—there, here and everywhere." ☺

—Tula Connell

Resources

The New York State Labor-Religion Coalition has published *Border Witness: Youth Confront NAFTA*, which includes student photos and quotes documenting the 2001 maquila trip and a resource information glossary, info@labor-religion.org; 518-459-5400; www.labor-religion.org.

- To learn more about the Institute for Labor Studies 11th-grade curriculum on the global economy, contact Charles Suffridge, 816-235-1446.
- The AFL-CIO website includes information on "Talking Union to Your Kids" and other outreach material for connecting with young people: www.aflcio.org/front/reachingout.htm.
- For an overview of sweatshop issues and getting young people involved visit the UNITE website at www.uniteunion.org and click on "Stop Sweatshops." Includes a link to USAS.
- Free the Children: www.freethechildren.org. ☺

BLONDS HAVE MORE FUNDS



Hot property: Chicago firefighters show off their new blond hairdos at a Sept. 11 fund-raiser.

TOM KURGAN/AFF LOCAL 2

When Chicago firefighters show up at a hair salon, it's not usually to tweak their tresses.

But in November and December, more than 1,000 members of Fire Fighters Local 2 visited hair salons across the area, coloring their hair blond to raise funds for scholarships for children whose firefighter parents died in the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Chicago-based Mario Tricoci hair salons donated \$1,000 for

each firefighter who opted for golden locks over a three-week period and is coordinating efforts to raise more money for The Hundred Club of Cook County, an organization dedicated to aiding the families of fallen firefighters, police and paramedics. The club will send the donations to the New York Firefighters 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund and the New York State Fraternal Order of Police Foundation World Trade Center Police Disaster Fund.

"It was a way to show our union brothers in New York Local 2 would do anything to help, in any way," says Daniel Fortuna, Local 2 director of public relations.

Donations can be sent to Do Blonds Have More Funds, c/o Mario Tricoci Corporate Offices, 273 East Hellen Rd., Palatine, Ill. 60067. Checks should be made payable to The Hundred Club of Cook County. For more information, call 847-202-1700. @

Whoville, USA

What do you call a CEO who eliminates 20,000 union jobs, ignores promises of neutrality in organizing drives and contracts out jobs? According to a national online poll sponsored by Jobs with Justice, he's the 2001 National Grinch of the Year—also known as C. Michael Armstrong, AT&T chief executive officer.

This was the first year of the national Grinch poll, following several years of naming local Grinches of the Year by JwJ chapters in cities around the country. This year's national voting took place on the JwJ website and those of several unions, including Communications Workers of America, which has battled Armstrong's actions since he was named CEO four years ago.

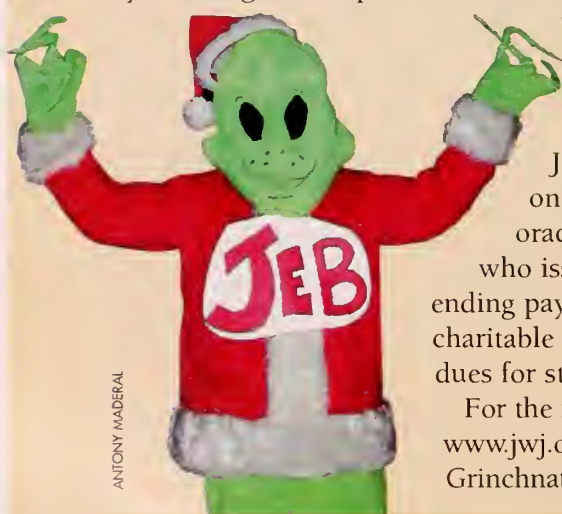
Armstrong had some tough competition, including first runner-up U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, who tried to stifle debate on Fast Track trade negotiating authority by claiming after Sept. 11 that Fast Track was the best way

to counter terrorism.

The eight local and state Grinches named include: Florida Gov.

Jeb Bush (R) for his attacks on state workers and Colorado Gov. Bill Owens (R), who issued an executive order ending paycheck deductions for charitable contributions and union dues for state employees.

For the full Grinch list, visit www.jwj.org/Misc/Grinchnational.htm. @



ANTONY MADRAL

Green and mean: A union activist poses as Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who won one of eight local Grinch of the Year awards from Jobs with Justice.

A Grassroots Education

For more than five years, administrators at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana have been telling the 5,000 graduate employees trying to form a union with AFT they are students, not workers, and not eligible to join a union.

In response, teaching, research and graduate assistants held a "work-in" on an unseasonably balmy fall day, conducting classes, grading papers and meeting with undergraduates on the outdoor campus quad and inside the administration building.

"By bringing our work to a public place, we demonstrate that this is, indeed, work," says Kate Bullard, co-president of the Graduate Employees Organization. "Because

our members often work alone in classrooms, the work-in is also a solidarity-building tool," says Bullard. "And it gives us the opportunity to talk to undergraduates about unions."

After graduate employees at Temple University in Philadelphia sought to form a union with AFT, the Pennsylvania state courts last year ruled they were workers, clearing their way to victory. The Illinois activists also are working to clarify the rights of graduate employees at public universities under state law. In fall 2000, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that graduate employees at private universities are free to form unions for a voice on the job. @



MICHAEL STEWART

Open air: In a work-in with a twist, Illinois graduate student employees taught classes and graded papers outdoors to show the work they do.

PUBLICATIONS

Power Politics, by Arundhati Roy, explores the human and environmental costs of development. Using examples, such as the privatization of India's power supply by U.S.-based energy companies and the construction of monumental dams in India that will dislocate millions of

people, Roy challenges activists to fight for social justice in India—and, by extension, the world. \$12. South End Press, www.southendpress.org.

An Introduction to the Law of Employment Discrimination, by Michael Evan Gold offers union organizers and activists a short introduction to federal laws barring workplace discrimination based on race, gender and disability. Gold, an associate professor at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, aims his jargon-free prose at nonlawyers. \$10.95. Cornell University Press, www.cornellpress.cornell.edu.

The Union Member's Complete Guide, by Michael Mauer, explains the rights and responsibilities of being a union member, along with a quick

review of how unions work. As workers form unions, this guide offers a straightforward approach to helping them learn about contracts, negotiations, their rights on the job and unions' role

in their communities. \$12.95. Union Communication Services Inc., www.unionist.com.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Lessons in Labor History, a curriculum for middle and high school students, helps young people understand the enormous social and economic forces that have shaped the lives of working people from the 18th century until today. The study suggestions, background materials, performance tasks and lesson plans are for teachers who seek to incorporate the stories of workers' struggles for justice into their social studies and history classes. The curriculum was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the state AFL-CIO, the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers/AFT and the Wisconsin Education Association Council (a National Education Association affiliate). \$20 plus 5.5 percent sales tax in Wisconsin; \$30 plus shipping outside the state. Order from Publication Sales, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Drawer 179, Milwaukee, Wis. 53293-0179, call 800-243-8782 or visit www.dpi.state.wi.us/pubsales/global9a.html.

WEBSIGHTINGS

www.nationalpartnership.org/workandfamily/fmleave/GeneralAudience1.htm—A stunning 78 percent of employees say they need leave time covered by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act but haven't taken it because they can't afford to take time without pay. The National Partnership for Women and Families offers a new guide on its website, "Why Americans Need Family Leave Benefits—And How They Can Get Them," outlining some of the public policy changes activists are working toward in workplaces and halls of government to ensure that working men and women can spend time with their families.

www.familiesandwork.org—Although funded mainly by corporations, the Families and Work Institute publishes many reports that union activists interested in helping workers balance work and family will find useful. A recent example: "Feeling Overworked: When Work Becomes Too Much," showing how overwork affects safety in the workplace, job performance, employee retention and health care costs.

www.womensenews.org—Women's E-news, produced by the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Educational Fund, offers articles about issues facing working women and the

ability to sign up for a weekly e-mail newsletter featuring news, commentary and profiles.

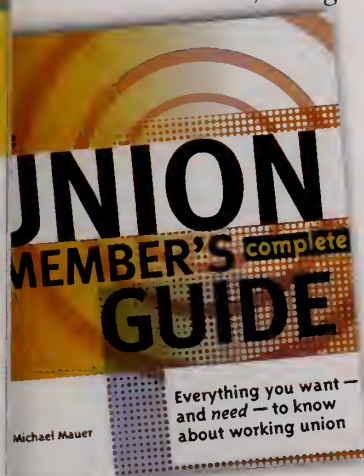
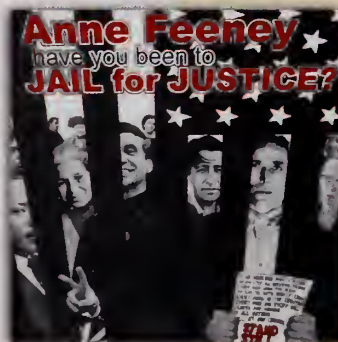
BULLETIN

In Colombia, the penalty for activists seeking a voice on the job often is death: The number of unionists assassinated in Colombia is higher than in the rest of the world combined. The nonprofit group U.S./Labor Education in the Americas Project recently began publishing an online, bimonthly newsletter, the *Violence Against Colombian Trade Unions Bulletin*, to educate activists. Log on to www.usleap.org and click on the bulletin in the left-hand column.

MUSIC

"Have You Been to Jail for Justice?" by Anne Feeney mixes original folk-style songs and union classics to inspire activists to keep fighting for workers' rights. "War on the

Workers," with its call-and-response chorus, is a natural for picket lines and rallies, as is the rhyming "Whatever Happened to the Eight-Hour Day?" \$10 for a cassette, \$15 for a CD. Available on the Labor Heritage Foundation website at www.laborheritage.org.



Top 20 Reasons to Visit www.aflcio.org

News

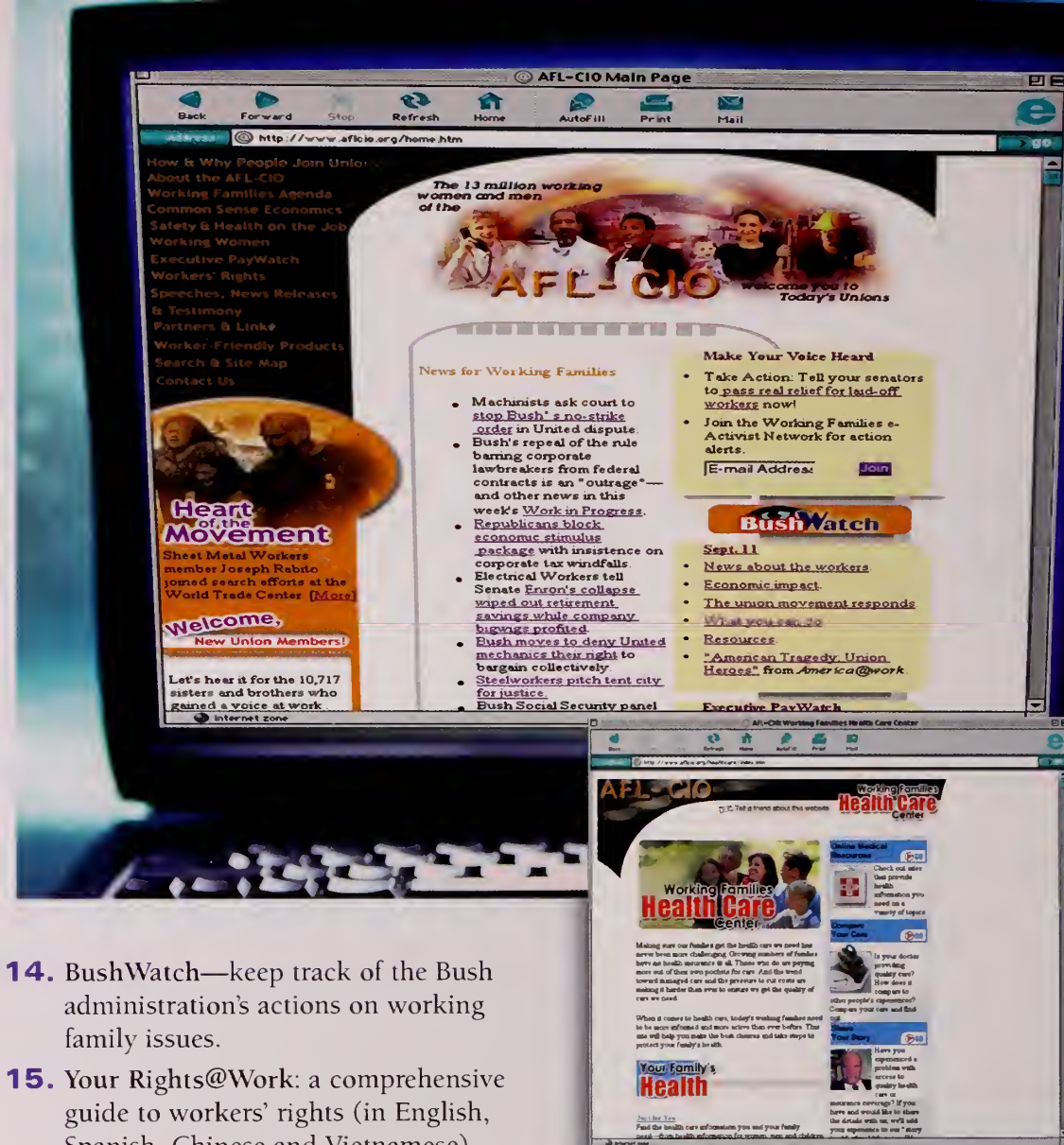
1. Updates every day from and about the union movement.
2. *Work in Progress*, the weekly organizing update.
3. Hot news about the economy: layoffs by sector, unemployment claims and news about proposals to help displaced workers and the Bush administration's response.
4. Executive PayWatch: the online center on excessive CEO pay—and what you can do about it.
5. E-activist campaigns with online actions that make an off-line impact.

Games and Special Features

6. Online fun smashing corporate greed!
7. Vital Pursuits and Your Rights@Work quizzes to test your knowledge.
8. A moving tribute to the working heroes of Sept. 11—read their stories and send an e-card.
9. Education about the union movement's culture and history.
10. E-cards to send family, friends and co-workers.
11. Screen savers that celebrate workers.

Resources

12. The Working Families Health Care Center.
13. Unions 101: Basic fact sheets in English and Spanish and information about how to organize a union—and why.



14. BushWatch—keep track of the Bush administration's actions on working family issues.
15. Your Rights@Work: a comprehensive guide to workers' rights (in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese).
16. Sources of help in paying for college.
17. Interactive tools like the calculator that lets working women find out how much they'll lose because of unequal pay.
18. *When the Paycheck Stops*—a survival guide for unemployment.
19. Where to get homework help for the kids.
20. News and features about young activists changing college campuses and tackling sweatshops.

It's all at www.aflcio.org. Visit today!

BushWatch

How has the nation fared under the presidency of George W. Bush? A new web feature on www.aflcio.org, "A Year With George W. Bush," takes a look at the president's first year in office—including Bush decisions on nominations and appointments, worker safety and health, workers' rights and unions, the nation's unbalanced budget, taxes, Social Security, Medicare, economic stimulus and more.

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

MARCH 2002

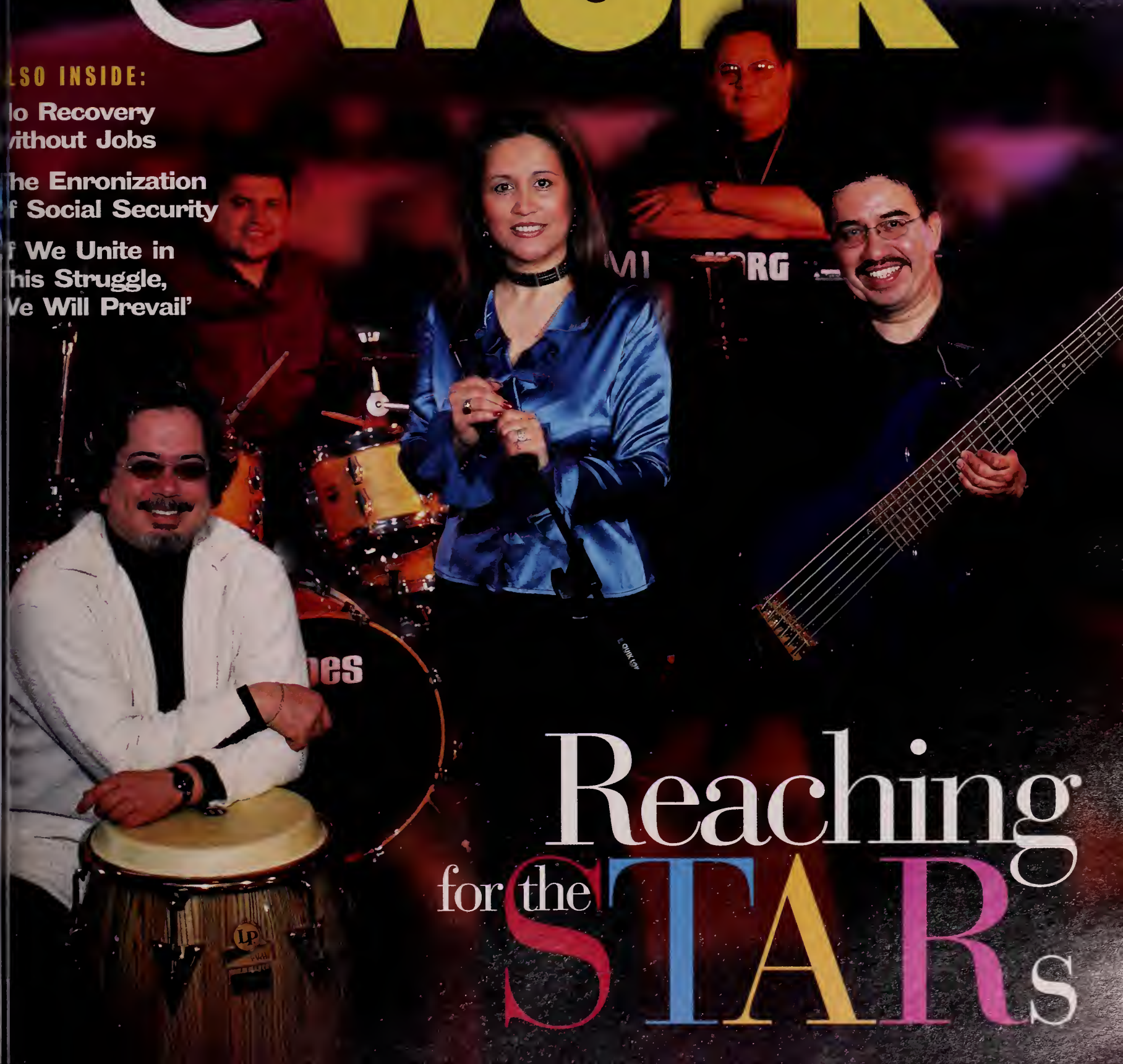
America @work

ALSO INSIDE:

No Recovery
without Jobs

The Enronization
of Social Security

If We Unite in
this Struggle,
We Will Prevail



Reaching
for the **STARs**

"AS AN OLD Goldwater Republican,' I don't often agree with the AFL-CIO. However, I applaud the action you took urging corporations not to re-elect any directors they have who were also Enron directors. I read about this in today's newspaper, [which] said the AFL-CIO identified some two dozen major corporations that share directors with the Enron board....Also, I would like to see a list of major corporations that have [Arthur] Andersen as auditors. In both cases, they failed to do their fiduciary duty to employees and stockholders and should be exposed to public rebuke."

—Ira Glickstein, United University Professions/AFT, Apalachin, N.Y.

SAY WHAT?

What steps is your union taking to aid members during the economic recession?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

ABOUT WHAT YOUR UNION IS PLANNING FOR LABOR 2002:

"TEAMSTERS LOCAL 435's rank-and-file political action committee...[already has] identified the target areas [where] we must succeed to maintain a worker-friendly state Senate and concluded our selection of state House candidates whom we intend to support. We are drafting worksite volunteers...for our voter registration program and have established our site captains for our member-to-member outreach program...recommitting one captain per 30 members...and, most importantly, we will be working hand-in-hand with our sister locals and the state AFL-CIO attempting to replicate our victory in 2000."

—Steve Vairma, secretary-treasurer, Teamsters Local 435, Denver

"I AM NOT a member of your organization nor ever thought we would agree on such a major issue and opportunity. I wanted to yell with joy [ôver] your efforts and announcement that the AFL-CIO wants all directors of the Enron Corp. to be reconsidered for election as board members to other businesses. You're right...these people should be held to a higher standard. You're right that these people did not do their duty to protect the employees and shareholders, and I believe this is a time that the AFL-CIO should use all its influence to make changes in both campaign reform laws and review responsibilities of corporate boards and auditors and accounting practices...."

—Nick Bates, Duxbury, Mass.

"EVEN THOUGH I don't belong to a union, I can see the benefits. I'm especially glad that you oppose the Fast Track trade bill. This is way too much power to put in the hands of one man! There are absolutely no protections for workers. The congressmen have come here to North Carolina to try to appease the jobless workers, but I don't trust congressmen anymore. I don't believe for a minute that they will enforce anything to help us. They've sold out to corporate money. I see you mounted a massive effort to defeat the bill in the [U.S.] House and came very close. Count me in if you're doing the same for the Senate....It is frightening to see how our government has enacted laws against American workers."—Linda Evans, Matthews, N.C.

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.



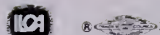
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CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

Enron workers seek justice
Graduate students win
breakthrough contract
Big year for bargaining

21 LIKE IT IS

Targeting terrorism or workers'
rights?

22 OUT THERE

Jekyll, Hyde or Linda Chavez?
Workers' rights:
More than history
Going for the gold

23 HOMEPAGE

Publications: *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century*
Murals: *Great Walls of Joliet*
Conferences: The AFL-CIO Working for America Institute's annual conference
National Conference for Labor Representatives in the Health Care Industry
Exhibit: "Witnesses and Warriors: The Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936-1937"
News Service: Workers Independent News Service
Websightings: An online help desk for union Web workers and more



JAMES MCGOON

8

REACHING FOR THE STARS

Latin musicians, long relegated by major recording labels to contracts that offer low wages and few benefits, waged a successful 10-year campaign to win a voice at work

10

NO RECOVERY WITHOUT JOBS

By year's end, unemployment could be up to 6.5 percent—and without jobs, say economic experts who recognize the needs of working families, there is no economic recovery



CONNIE KELLNER

15

THE ENRONIZATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY

After meeting for seven months, the president's hand-picked privatization commission offered three options for turning over a portion of Social Security's guaranteed benefits into a Wall Street gamble

18



JIM TYNAN

'IF WE UNITE IN THIS STRUGGLE, WE WILL PREVAIL'

Seven workers from around the world took part in a unique AFL-CIO forum and shared their stories of global economic injustice

UPS, Oil Talks Kick Off Busy Contract Season

Bargaining on one of the nation's largest collective bargaining contracts began Jan. 30 when the Teamsters and United Parcel Service exchanged proposals. The negotiations kick off a busy bargaining year, which includes major contracts in aerospace, transportation, telecommunications and local government. In the economic aftermath of the Enron scandal and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, most of the talks will focus on job and pension security as well as health care costs and fair sharing of corporate profits with workers.

The current UPS contract covers 210,000 full- and part-time employees and expires July 31. "UPS Teamsters are the most productive workers on the planet....It is time they get a share of the profits earned since

the last contract," says IBT General President James P. Hoffa.

The 2002 bargaining season began with an agreement between PACE International Union and Royal Dutch/Shell that set a national pattern for future oil company pacts. The contract calls for no layoffs and pay raises of at least 3.5 percent in three of the four years and for the company to continue paying 80 percent of health care costs.

"In view of the events of recent months and the decline of the economic climate, this settlement represents optimism on the part of the oil industry and our membership," says PACE Administrative Vice President Jim Pannell.

Talks between 25,000 Communications Workers of America members and AT&T are expected to begin soon, with



Looking for fairness: PACE members in Rodeo, Calif., rally for a fair contract.

job security a top issue. "Our critical goals in this year's bargaining at AT&T, as the company goes through yet another major restructuring, are job security and the opportunity for our members to move into the new jobs being created by technology," says CWA President Morton Bahr. Other contracts up for negotiation include several in transportation, such as the mechanics and engineers at Boeing, represented by the Machinists and SPEEA/International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers

respectively, and the Air Line Pilots at Northwest Airlines.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union contract with the Pacific Maritime Association will be up for renewal with talks beginning in April.

In New York City, three contracts covering more than 150,000 workers will expire this year, including 125,000 service workers represented by AFSCME, 20,000 Metropolitan Transportation Authority workers represented by the Transport Workers and almost 9,000 Fire Fighters. @

Bush Budget Hurts Workers, Seniors

President George W. Bush's proposed fiscal year 2003 federal budget would increase military and domestic defense spending to protect the nation, while taking away programs that protect workers and seniors. The Bush budget breaks the administration's promise to protect the Social Security trust fund and would siphon \$2 trillion from Social Security and Medicare trust funds over the next 10 years to pay for his tax cut for millionaires and cuts in other government programs passed last year.

"Seniors and their families will be among the biggest losers if this budget is adopted," warns George

Kourpias, Alliance for Retired Americans president.

At the same time, Bush proposes a 7 percent cut (after taking out fixed expenses like unemployment insurance benefits) in the U.S. Department of Labor budget. Many of the programs targeted for cuts offer critical help to working families that have lost jobs in the economic hardship and recession of the past year, while others are vital workplace safety and worker protection initiatives.

Bush would cut overall worker training programs by 9 percent. He also proposes to cut 83 full-time Occupational Safety and Health Administration positions including 64 in

enforcement. Other proposed cuts include reduced staff in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, which administers nondiscrimination and affirmative action programs on federal contracts. The budget also would end Labor Department funding for several child education programs and workplace-based programs targeted at youths to combat HIV/AIDS.

While these vital working family programs would be cut, Bush is proposing to increase Labor Department funding for internal union investigations.

For a copy of the AFL-CIO analysis of the budget and a look at a year under the Bush presidency, visit www.aflcio.org. @

V&V Victory

After an eight-month fight for a fair contract, which included a strike and an illegal lockout, workers at the Mexican cheese manufacturer V&V Supremo Foods Inc. in Chicago have their first union contract.

The 90 members of Teamsters Local 703 received raises ranging from 12 percent to 24 percent.

Workers voted for the union in October 2000 but were forced out on strike in May 2001. Backed by a coalition of religious, political and community leaders, including U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D), the workers successfully urged local markets and restaurants not to buy V&V products. @

Enron Workers Seek Justice

Digna Showers and more than two dozen co-workers at Enron Corp. traveled 25 hours on buses to tell Congress and the nation they lost their jobs and retirement security when the energy giant imploded.

"Just because you're laid off doesn't mean you should lose your pension," Showers said at a special briefing at the AFL-

While top company executives cashed in their stock before the company collapsed, management prohibited workers from selling their stock, which nosedived to less than \$1 a share when Enron filed for bankruptcy in December.

Congress and the U.S. Justice Department now are investigating Enron's business and accounting practices that led to the bankruptcy. The AFL-CIO has called on the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to exercise its authority to ask federal courts to permanently bar Enron's directors from serving on boards of public companies because their actions undermined the integrity of the nation's capital markets.

The AFL-CIO is spearheading efforts to ensure the more than 4,000 eligible Enron workers receive full severance pay—payment of which was restricted in a bankruptcy court order requested by Enron.

The April *America@work* will include a special report examining the Enron debacle. For more information, visit www.aflcio.org/enron. @



Disaster: The collapse of Enron cost Digna Showers \$450,000 in retirement savings.

CIO headquarters. Showers, an 18-year Enron employee, lost \$450,000 in retirement savings. Most of the Enron workers' 401(k) retirement accounts were packed with Enron stock.

UNIONS PITCH IN TO REBUILD NEW YORK

Union pension funds are putting workers' money to work to help rebuild New York City after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The AFL-CIO Investment Program—which includes the Housing Investment Trust, Building Investment Trust and Urban Development Fund—will devote \$750 million to finance housing and commercial real estate development throughout the city. And by granting affordable mortgages, HIT will

increase working families' home ownership opportunities.

The federation will open an Investment Program office in New York to coordinate its expanded activities in the city. HIT and BIT, with combined assets of \$4 billion, invest Taft-Hartley funds and public employee pension funds in housing and urban development projects nationwide to produce competitive returns for participants and create jobs for union construction workers. @

SPOTLIGHT

NYU Graduate Employees Win Breakthrough Contract

In a breakthrough move, graduate employees at New York University, members of UAW Local 2110, ratified a contract with administrators in January. It's the first time private university student employees have won a union agreement, and activists say it will bolster similar organizing campaigns nationwide.

"Our members at NYU will now be treated the way professional educators should be treated at one of our nation's top universities, which can only enhance excellence in education," says UAW Vice President Elizabeth Bunn.

The four-year contract raises the floor for minimum stipends by nearly 40 percent for the 1,300 teaching and research assistants, who help teach classes and grade tests at the New York City campus. It also includes reg-

ular wage increases and employer-paid health insurance.

The victory builds on another historic first by the NYU workers. In November 2000, they won a National Labor Relations Board ruling enabling graduate employees at private universities to form unions for a voice on the job. More than 30,000 graduate workers at public universities are union members.

With organizing campaigns under way at other private universities such as Columbia, Tufts, University of Pennsylvania and Brown, NYU's contract is a symbol of hope, activists say. "It is very promising for graduate employees at other private universities," says Elana Gorfinkel, a member of the negotiating team and a teaching assistant in the cinema studies department. "They can look to this contract as an index of change."

Meanwhile, undergraduate workers organizing with UAW Local 2322 at University of Massachusetts at Amherst won their own breakthrough in January when the commonwealth's labor commission ruled resident advisors have the right to form a union. @



Turning a page: UAW Local 2110 members at New York University negotiated the first contract at a private university to cover graduate student employees.

Don't Derail Amtrak

The recommendation by a federal agency to break up Amtrak, the nation's sole provider of intercity passenger train transportation, is a risky privatization proposal that would doom most of the system, according to transportation unions.

In February, the Amtrak Reform Council recommended dismantling the rail carrier and replacing it in part by private operators. The council was created by Congress in 1997 to make recommendations for making Amtrak become self-sufficient by the end of 2002.

"This is no way to run a railroad," says Sonny Hall, president of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department. "It is deeply troubling," he says, "that some in Congress and the rogue Amtrak Reform Council would cannibalize Amtrak and turn it over to private operators who wish to cherry-pick Amtrak's most prized assets and rights-of-way and let the rest of the system wither."

For years, TTD has lobbied for the adequate funding of the passenger rail system, and transportation unions charge lack of funding forces Amtrak to focus its energies on survival, rather than developing strategies for delivering better service. @



Staying on track: TTD President Sonny Hall calls for Congress to fund Amtrak adequately.

Unions Focus on Aviation Security

In the wake of Sept. 11, unions representing aviation workers are seeking improvements in airline security.

Air Line Pilots proposed the government establish a universal security card system for airport and airline employees. Under such a system, workers would carry a single "smart card" with an embedded microchip containing vital employment and personal information.

Federal officials also are reviewing ALPA's proposal to allow pilots to carry weapons for cockpit security. The union had proposed last September that

participation be voluntary and pilots receive extensive background checks, psychological screening and intensive training.

Meanwhile, the AFA says several regional air carriers require their members to conduct security searches on their aircraft, without having received proper training or sufficient time to do so. Because of the time crunch brought on by the security checks, ground supervisors are pressuring flight attendants to cut the searches short so passengers can be boarded and an "on-time" departure can be achieved, the union says in a statement. @

First Step in Voting Reform

Supporters of election reform are hailing a California court order directing the state to remove "hanging chad" voting machines before the 2004 election. These machines are the same as those in Florida, where thousands of ballots went uncounted and resulted in the Supreme Court deciding the 2000 presidential election.

U.S. District Judge Stephen Wilson's ruling came in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the AFL-CIO, the advocacy group Common Cause and several civil rights groups.

"This California judge's decision is an important first step to making sure that American citizens can have faith in our voting system again," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. @

Protecting Workers and the Community from Hazardous Chemicals

Unions are joining with members of allied organizations to protect workers and their communities from the dangerous effects of the chemicals they use on the job.

Members of PACE Local 5-857 joined with the Ponca Tribe to ask the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to stop illegal dumping of hazardous materials and waste in woods behind the Continental Carbon Co. plant in Ponca City, Okla.

Discarded near an Arkansas River floodplain where children play the chemicals and other hazardous materials also threaten to pollute the river and the groundwater that feed wells, activists say.

Concerned over workers' exposure to carcinogens at Pantex, a federal nuclear complex, the Amarillo (Texas) Metal Trades Council joined with community leaders and the Ramazzini Institute, a multinational group of occupational health researchers and educators, to form the new Amarillo Health Consortium. The consortium provides lung cancer screenings for active and retired workers who have been exposed to toxic chemicals on the job. @

MECHANICS STAND STRONG

In the first major airline contract negotiated since the congressional bailout of the airline industry, Machinists fought back a proposal by United Airlines that would have forced the union to accept concessions without allowing the members to vote. The tentative agreement gives IAM the right to negotiate changes in the contract and affirms rank-and-file union members' right to vote on any proposed future changes in the new contract.

"We never wanted to be the point of the spear for United's recovery plan. The company didn't ask this of other bargaining groups during their contract negotiations," says IAM spokesman Frank Larkin. "There was no reason for these discussions to turn into United's short-term recovery negotiations."

The contract talks were delayed when President George W. Bush, responding to the lobbying of the airline industry, appointed a Presidential Emer-

gency Board (PEB) after workers voted to strike in December 2001. The order creating the PEB included a mandatory 60-day period in which the union could not strike. The emergency board was charged with investigating the dispute and making nonbinding recommendations. The union unsuccessfully challenged the appointment of the PEB in federal court, claiming that it unnecessarily prevented collective bargaining.

With the strike deadline approaching, transportation unions urged Bush and Congress to stay out of the negotiations and let the collective bargaining process work. "This agreement shows that settlements can be reached without government interference," says IAM Vice President Robert Roach Jr.

The tentative agreement, which covers 15,000 workers, also includes a 37 percent pay raise this year for United's top mechanics, who haven't received a raise since 1994. @

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS: DELTA THWARTED DRIVE

The National Mediation Board is investigating charges by the Flight Attendants that Delta Air Lines illegally intimidated employees and exploited fears engendered by the tragedy of Sept. 11 to thwart the largest organizing drive in the airline industry.

An overwhelming 98 percent of the 5,609 ballots cast were in favor of joining AFA, but under the rules that govern transportation elections, the

union must win a majority of all eligible voters in a unit. The remaining 13,424 workers who did not vote were counted as “no” votes. AFA is asking the NMB for a new election in which a majority of the ballots would be sufficient for victory.

Delta managers sent letters and videos to flight attendants implying the workers would lose their jobs if they voted for the union, erroneously told laid-off flight attendants they were not eligible to vote and urged flight attendants to tear up their union ballots, union leaders say.

After Sept. 11, “videos of our CEO [Leo F. Mullin] played continuously in our crew room,” says Seattle-based flight attendant Mike Trau. “He kept repeating the threats 9-11 placed on our airline and talked about our family atmosphere, then he’d instruct us to rip up our ballots.”

“In America, democratic elections are supposed to express the voice of the people,” says AFA President Patricia Friend. “In this election, the flight attendants’ voices were silenced by fear and intimidation. Now the American government must act to punish Delta for violating the rights of its workers.” @



Fight back: AFA President Patricia Friend joined Delta flight attendants at a rally in August, days before terrorist attacks gave Delta new allegedly illegal scare tactics to thwart organizing.

Hunger, Homelessness on the Rise

Bob Salvatore, San Antonio AFL-CIO Council president, knows people in his Texas tourist town are hungry. “The numbers of traveling homeless, the working poor and the unemployed are all up,” he says. “And with donations down, our United Way food bank is about 30 percent short of satisfying demand.”

The U.S. Conference of Mayors Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness surveyed San Antonio and 26 other cities. In December, the group released its findings that hunger and homelessness increased significantly in almost all of them, with the pace accelerating after Sept. 11.

Twenty-five cities showed an average 23 percent increase in demand for food, the largest jump the survey has shown since 1991.

For more information, click on www.usmayors.org. @

OUT FRONT

The economists who claim the recession is just about over haven’t talked to steelworkers lately. Or auto parts makers. Or minimum-wage hotel workers. These workers know it’s going to take good jobs with good benefits to put America back to work.

A serious approach to economic stimulus would not focus on corporate tax breaks, as the administration’s has. It would put money in the pockets of working people who would spend it and focus on creating and keeping good jobs. That will require rebuilding America’s infrastructure, ensuring retirement and health care security and holding corporations accountable to their communities, workers, customers and to America.

We must address America’s manufacturing crisis by ensuring that exploitation of workers is not the basis for international trade competition. Our trade deals must demand and enforce workers’ rights so our companies are not competing with companies built on slave labor and child labor—and our tax laws should not provide incentives for shifting manufacturing jobs offshore. We have to make work pay, with a raised minimum wage that provides a basic income floor for working families. We have to turn low-wage service-sector jobs into good jobs, with decent pay, benefits, training opportunities and career ladders. We must maintain a well-trained and well-compensated public workforce and fight attempts to privatize government services—including education. And we must fight attacks on workers’ basic workplace and wage-and-hour protections.

We can create good jobs while making America stronger and more secure by investing in our infrastructure—our schools, roads and bridges and our energy, transportation, public health, water and sewer systems.

The Enron debacle has demonstrated too clearly that we must strengthen and protect retirement security for all Americans. We have to stop the erosion of employer-provided pensions and ensure that the Bush administration and other privatizers are not successful in replacing Social Security’s guaranteed benefits with uninsured individual accounts like those held by the Enron workers.

High-quality, affordable health care must be available to all Americans. Health care costs are soaring, and prescription drugs are becoming more and more unaffordable, especially for seniors. It’s time to enact a real patients’ bill of rights, to expand coverage for uninsured children and to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

Finally, it’s time to rein in morals-free, anything-goes corporate behavior and hold U.S. companies strictly accountable. We have to stop the insider deals and untangle the conflicts of interest that allow greed to trump honesty and decency in our corporate culture. And we have to insist on respect for the rights of *all* workers—including the right to make a free choice to join with others in a union. @

Real Economic Stimulus



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

In tune: At a rally outside Sony Discos in San Antonio, musicians sounded out for a voice at work.

Reaching for the STARS

When Tejano music sensation

Selena released what would be her last CD, "Dreaming of You," the album was released jointly by two recording companies, EMI Records and EMI Latin. As with many artists on the verge of "crossing over" from Latin music to pop, Selena recorded some songs in English and others in Spanish. But the mix of languages masked a deeper division: The musicians who played English-language songs worked under an industrywide union contract that provides health benefits, pension funding and access to royalties. Those performing Spanish-language songs weren't covered by the contract and didn't get any benefits.

This kind of economic discrimination, widespread in the music industry, galvanized a campaign by the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada to launch Support Tejano Advancement in Recording, STAR. While Latin music sales have skyrocketed from \$260 million in 1995 to \$608 million in 2000, the musicians who play the horns, drums, guitars and other instruments that drive the south-of-the-border sounds were not sharing the fruits of this success.

Musicians might be paid a fixed fee per song—whether it took one hour or five days to record. They didn't have a union contract requiring record companies to contribute to a pension fund.

In September, after a four-year public campaign and nearly a decade of union organizing, AFM activists convinced the top Latin recording companies to sign on to the 60-year-old industrywide recording contract. Now, these musicians will get fair wages and ben-

efits such as health insurance payments and pensions, as well as a share of record sales. The agreement covers thousands of musicians, most of them in Texas and Florida.

"We will continue to fight until all musicians who work in the profitable Latin market enjoy the same opportunities to earn a living wage while enriching the cultural heritage of our country," says Tom Lee, AFM president.

The STAR campaign began in 1997, when organizers reached out to musicians and discussed problems they faced when working under nonunion contracts on Latin recordings. Organizers talked with musicians who dropped by the AFM office in San Antonio to pick up checks for their work—covered by a strong union contract—on radio commercial jingles. Many of the same musicians sometimes worked on Latin music recordings—without benefits of a union contract, says Mike Muñoz, AFM's director of Latin organizing. The union recruited a core group of activists who in turn enlisted other musicians across the country, from Los Angeles to Miami. "This is nontraditional organizing," says Muñoz, noting the workers don't have one worksite or employer—or standard work schedules. "Musicians sometimes record in the middle of the night," he says. Union leaders conducted their research in record stores. "We would buy CDs and look at who was working on Sony Discos and EMI Latin



Latino Musicians Win a Voice@Work

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI



Making music: Musicians jammed together on a 7 Days in June "justice bus" tour that included a stop for a rally at Sony's corporate offices in San Antonio.

A harmonious victory

The STAR campaign made its breakthrough in early September, just as the Congressional Hispanic Caucus was planning a hearing in San Antonio about the difficulties faced by musicians who record Latin music. Although BMG Latin and Universal Latin had signed the industrywide union contract several years ago, the remaining three of the "Big Five" Latin recording companies—EMI Latin, WEA Latina and Sony Discos—were holding out. Because of union activists' strong coalition with key members of Congress, they won sufficient support to call the hearing. The possibility of heightened political and public scrutiny convinced company executives to come to the table.

At the hearing, musicians described their unequal treatment. "Major record companies would set up 'satellite' companies, so anyone who worked on Hispanic music got paid less and got no pension benefits," says Calle. While the big recording companies abided by the industrywide contract for their mainstream recordings, they would claim their Latin labels were separate entities and didn't have to follow the same rules. "Our workforce needs to be educated about the benefits of having a union contract, so when they retire they can have some dignity," he says.

"I understand that, for musicians, their performance is a labor of love," said Rodriguez at the Sept. 8 hearing, which he held with fellow Texas Democratic Reps. Solomon Ortiz and Charlie Gonzalez at the San Antonio City Hall. "But it is also a way of surviving, their bread and butter. They deserve to be treated in a way that's appropriate." AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, along with Texas AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Emmett Sheppard, spoke in support of the workers and celebrated their victory. "For Tejano recording artists who work for Latin record labels and the Big Five, the agreement will now make a world of difference," said Chavez-Thompson.

Today, when these workers record for the "Big Five" Latin labels, in addition to the artistic satisfaction that comes from entertaining music lovers, they will experience the benefits—including dignity and security—of a union contract. "I've worked under union contracts in Los Angeles for commercials," before moving to San Antonio, says Tejano trumpet player Rene Gasca. "I know the difference a union contract makes." @

recordings," says Muñoz. "Then we'd assign committee members to contact people they knew or had recorded with."

Like many unions that implement the AFL-CIO Voice@Work strategy, AFM involved community members and elected officials in the struggle for workers' rights. Musicians visited congressional lawmakers to win their support and spoke on panels at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' issues conference in Washington, D.C. In 1999, elected officials were among the panelists at a San Antonio Jobs with Justice Workers' Rights Board hearing, a forum in which community leaders gather to hear workers discuss the difficulties they face in winning a voice at work. The board released a report based on musicians' testimony about unfair treatment.

Support for the STAR campaign spread among representatives in Congress and state legislatures from Texas, California and Arizona, with the Texas House of Representatives passing a resolution supporting the musicians' efforts for justice. "The members of Congress listened and helped us," says Miami saxophonist Ed Calle, who has recorded with such musical icons as Frank Sinatra and Placido Domingo. "They are doing the right thing."

Marshaling the unique talents of the activists, union leaders integrated music into their campaign. At a news conference prior to the September hearing in San Antonio, musicians started with a "moment of sound," a tuneful alternative to an opening prayer or moment of silence. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-Texas) joined them on his accordion. A band of organizing committee members—the STARlites—played at union

functions throughout the campaign, building support. Musicians jammed together on a "justice bus" tour during summer 2000, part of the AFL-CIO's 7 Days in June campaign to shine a spotlight on employer opposition to workers' desires to form unions, which included a stop for a rally at Sony's corporate offices in San Antonio.

"We are extremely grateful to the community and labor leaders who began to work with us in 1996 to identify the issues and raise the consciousness of the public and the musicians. We also are grateful to the members of the Workers' Rights Board who investigated and reported on these issues in 1999," says Lee, who also recognized the support of lawmakers in the campaign.

"We will continue to fight until all musicians who work in the profitable Latin market enjoy the same opportunities to earn a living wage while enriching the cultural heritage of our country."

—AFM President Tom Lee



ALEJANDRO ALONSO

On key: AFM President Tom Lee and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson testify about the difficulties faced by musicians who record Latin music during a hearing by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Laid off by the Boeing Co.

in December, interior mechanic Douglas Hodgson, a member of Machinists Local 751, considers himself lucky. At 46, with fishing industry experience, he's now getting certified as a seaman, work that will include International Longshore and Warehouse Union membership and pay comparable to what he earned at Boeing.

"Most co-workers my age are finding a very limited job market," says Hodgson, a Seattle-area resident. "Businesses want 18-year-olds who've never been union members, who think \$7 an hour is good."

That's the fear of Tony Panza, a Steelworkers Local 1157 member laid off in December from bankrupt LTV Steel Corp. in Cleveland. Now a subcontractor for a county worker training program—an 18-month position that pays \$15 an hour, with no benefits—Panza was offered a hospital technician job that paid only \$8 an hour. "I told

the lady that if I took it, I'd be losing \$80 a week in unemployment," recalls the married father of two.

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. economy lost a net 1.1 million jobs in 2001, with 1.3 million manufacturing jobs wiped out. By early 2002, the unemployment rate was nearly 6 percent—up from 3.9 percent in late 2000. And federal unemployment estimates do not count people who want work but have become too discouraged to keep looking. In a Labor Department survey released Feb. 1, for example, the number of people looking for work dropped by 924,000 in January.

People are anxious not only about finding new jobs, but ones with critical benefits such as health care. In early February, before his coverage ran out, Panza took his daughters to the doctor for physicals and to bring their shots up to date. "When I think of all the times over the last 14 years that my wife

No Recovery Without Jobs

BY JANE BIRNBAUM



Job hunting: Former Boeing employee Douglas Hodgson (left) attended career fairs after being laid off—and is one of the lucky aerospace workers to find new work with comparable pay.



Looking ahead: IBEW President Edwin Hill says organizing wireless and broadband workers is essential for the union to maintain its foothold in the growing telecommunications industry.

PAGE ONE

ity, to full employment.”

Says Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees President John Wilhelm, “Tens of thousands of our laid-off members don’t know what recovery everyone is talking about—they’re still hurting, not working and losing health coverage. We’ll know there’s a recovery when our members are back to work, taking care of their families.”

According to Mishel, economists who recognize the needs of working families consider 4 percent unemployment an acceptable “full employment” rate. But before the economy can return to a 4 percent unemployment rate, says Northeastern University professor and economist Barry Bluestone, it must grow 4 percent annually for a couple of years—and by 3 percent annually just to keep unemployment from rising. “If you’re not worried about employment, 1 percent economic growth is better than none,” Bluestone says. “If you worry about jobs and working families, it’s nowhere good enough.”

And 1 percent growth isn’t a given. Consumer spending, accounting for two-thirds of economic activity, typically helps lift a nation out of recession. But when

and the kids have gone to doctors, I am without a doubt deeply concerned about the fact we no longer have coverage,” he says.

By year’s end, unemployment could reach 6.5 percent, according to the nonprofit

Economic Policy Institute—and that figure is likely to improve only slightly in 2003 following the Senate’s failure in February to deliver a meaningful economic stimulus package that boosts and sustains U.S. economic growth. Beginning last year, union leaders joined with Capitol Hill allies to press for worker relief and some corporate tax cuts, which Senate Republicans twice blocked while rushing to give \$15 billion in grants and loans to the airline industry.

Without such relief, some groups will suffer even more than the predicted average 6.5 percent unemployment rate, says EPI Vice President Lawrence Mishel. “By the end of 2002, unemployment will be 11.3 percent for African Americans, 9 percent for Latinos, 35.3 percent for black teenagers and 8.6 percent for women householders.”

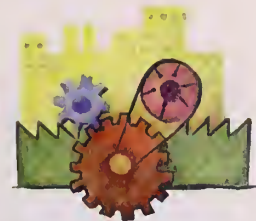
Then why are some financial experts announcing the recession is over? “They’re doing it because they desperately want people to buy stock, to promote the fortunes of business,” says University of Texas professor and economist James K. Galbraith. “But what’s important is a return to prosper-

unemployment keeps rising, even workers with jobs sit on their wallets, says University of Massachusetts professor and economist Robert Pollin. “As unemployment rises, the question is how far consumers will extend themselves when they’re already indebted to an unprecedented degree.” In 2000, the average ratio of household debt to household income was more than 100 percent for the first time, up from 75.7 percent in the 1980s, says Pollin. With the need to pay off this debt, and the possibility Congress may change bankruptcy law so fewer consumers can erase their debts and make a fresh start, “people may soon buy less of all kinds of things, meaning more job losses.”

Job loss or stagnation is occurring in many sectors, with continued growth predicted in only a few areas, according to an analysis of BLS numbers by MBG Information Services, a Washington, D.C.-based business analysis firm. And without jobs, says HERE’s Wilhelm, “there is no economic recovery.”

Here is a look at six sectors.

Manufacturing



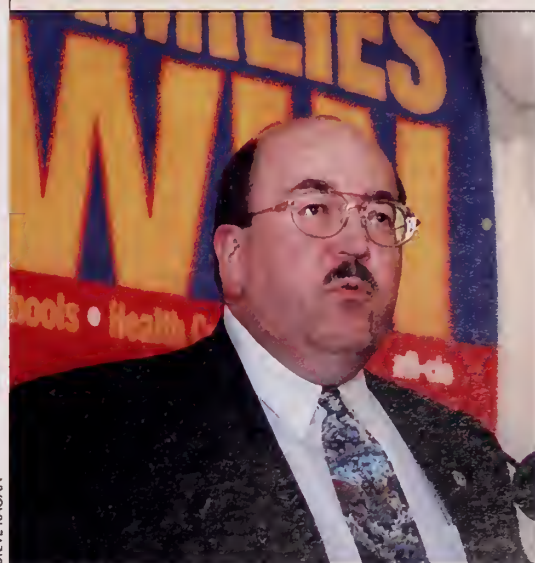
In 2001, the nation lost 1.3 million manufacturing jobs—and another 700,000 more will disappear this year, predicts Charles McMillion, chief economist and president of MBG. “In this recession, manufacturers stepped up the outsourcing of work to countries like China and Mexico,” he says. “We’re being hit in our most productive jobs, those with the most and highest quality machines behind them.”

Aerospace manufacturers have announced layoffs of approximately 10,000 IAM members in 2001, most after Sept. 11. The union anticipates aerospace won’t bounce back until 2003. Meanwhile, union leaders estimate most laid-off aerospace workers will be re-employed outside the industry at up to 30 percent lower pay, with big benefit cuts.

The nation’s economic prosperity in the late 1990s was a direct result of the strength of the manufacturing sector, which led the surge in productivity growth, says IAM President R. Thomas Buffenbarger. “If we want that growth back, we need a

The nation needs to fix “broken trade policies that do more to export U.S. jobs than export U.S.-made products.”

—IAM President R. Thomas Buffenbarger



STEVE KAGAN



Save Our Steel: USWA President Leo Gerard joined LTV Steel workers who staged a camp-in as they lobbied Congress for tariff policies that would strengthen manufacturing jobs.

national focus on rebuilding our industrial infrastructure, meaning large-scale reinvestment in plants and people. It also means fixing broken trade policies that do more to export U.S. jobs than export U.S.-made products."

Last October, Buffenbarger convened a meeting of major U.S. industrial union leaders to discuss manufacturing sector troubles with House and Senate Democratic leaders. The IAM also has developed an "early warning system" to identify troubled companies, so the union has time to work with employers and avoid layoffs.

The auto industry has seen 120,000 jobs lost in 2001, according to Sean McAlinden, a labor economist with the nonprofit Center for Automotive Research. Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. plan to eliminate some 22,000 assembly-line UAW jobs by 2004. Facing layoff, Joseph Robinson, a Ford spot and weld gun operator and member of UAW Local 980 in Edison, N.J., says union membership is making a big difference in his situation. "I feel fortunate the union has guaranteed that I have financial support during this time," he says.

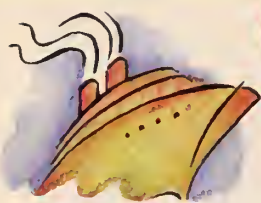
Most automotive job cuts are coming now in the Big Three automakers' salaried positions and among hourly workers at the mostly nonunion automotive parts houses.

"It's hell at the parts houses," says McAlinden. "At the nonunion shops, where they

were making \$10, \$11 an hour, tens of thousands have been forced into part-time employment." He estimates approximately 700,000 parts jobs—more than half UAW, IUE-CWA and IAM positions—moved outside the United States since 1982. Today, there are approximately 550,000 U.S. auto parts workers—and up to 25 percent of them may be laid off this year.

In the steel industry, employment fell to 200,500 in December 2001, down from nearly 234,000 two years earlier, while 30 steel companies—including Cleveland-based LTV Steel Corp.—went bankrupt. In the last two months of 2001 alone, more than 21,000 workers lost their jobs, according to the Steelworkers. "The American market has been flooded with steel by our trading partners, much of it shipped here at prices below the cost of production, and the U.S. International Trade Commission—by ruling unanimously that nearly 80 percent of steel products have been damaged—has confirmed this," says USWA President Leo Gerard. "We've told Congress and the Bush administration we need tariffs on imported steel. Unless we get assistance, major portions of the U.S. steel industry will cease to exist."

As part of the union's "Stand Up For Steel" campaign, activists have sent more than 600,000 letters to the White House and federal legislators. In December, more than 800 USWA members, primarily from the embattled LTV Steel plant in Cleveland, camped out at the National Labor College at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md., and lobbied Capitol Hill for improved tariff policies.



Tourism and Communications Services

Last year, the nation lost 101,000 hotel and lodging jobs, more than 70 percent of them after Sept. 11. Some 80,000 HERE members were laid off. "And we are not seeing re-employment with the benefits that folks need," says Tom Snyder, assistant to HERE President John Wilhelm.

Somewhat fewer hospitality jobs will be lost this year, says MBG's McMillion, "but it's still going to be a lot," he predicts. Bluestone concurs: "If you have a job but you're worried about it, you're not going to spend \$6,000 to take the family to Disneyland."

SEIU represents approximately 200,000

commercial building service workers nationwide, including custodians, security guards and others. It projects job growth of between 8 percent and 10 percent for security guards over the next three years. Job growth among custodians is expected to remain relatively flat, as it was in 2001, but with many nonunion workers making only minimum wage, they are not experiencing downward pressure on pay, according to SEIU research analyst Martin Thomas. Many unionized custodial workers have experienced wage increases—in New York City, for example, more than 30,000 Local 32B-J janitors got a 9.5 percent wage increase in a three-year contract signed after Sept. 11. The union organized approxi-

mately 10,000 building service workers in 2001, and has set "aggressive goals" for next year, says Thomas.

The communications sector poses a big challenge for the Communications Workers of America and Electrical Workers. While the sector showed a 2001 net gain of 6,000 jobs, that number masks great turmoil. Massive cuts in traditional land-line telephone jobs—the IBEW estimates 317,000 lost, many of them union—were coupled with massive hiring in typically nonunion broadband and wireless operations. Early this year, IBEW President Edwin Hill told an organizing conference it is essential the union help wireless and broadband workers organize immediately or risk losing its foothold in telecommunications.

Construction

Construction was a bright spot in 2001, adding approximately 63,000 new jobs. But future job growth is likely to be flat or decline slightly, McMillion says, because rising mortgage rates—which are tied to increasing long-term interest rates—could dampen home buying, while tight-budgeted state governments are delaying school and prison construction. Unleashed commercial real estate is scaring off lenders for new projects, according to Dean Baker, an economist and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research think tank.

While home buying was strong through most of 2001—creating jobs and opportunities for unions to reach out to workers—the prospect of buyers holding back because they're worried about jobs is creating uncertainty. "A Phoenix developer told me he sold only six homes in September, then started selling more, but now sales have slowed again," says John Martini, organizing director for the United Union of Roofers



and Waterproofers. The union has joined with community and faith-based groups to help exploited immigrant subcontractors in the Southwest's residential housing industry gain a voice at work.

According to AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department Organizing Director Carl Shaffer, who estimates that even though unions already have signed up approximately 20 percent of workers in the 63,000 new building and construction jobs created last year, the out-of-work list at most locals has grown significantly since the end of last summer. "We don't have much faith in economic recovery this year. People are holding off on big commitments," he says. "I think job growth will be flat this year."

When members are out of work, reaching out to nonunion workers is more difficult, says Shaffer, "and our own members don't understand why we're out looking for new ones." But it is essential for organizing to continue, he adds, and the union has recruited out-of-work members to leaflet, handbill and hire on at nonunion projects to engage co-workers—while supporting themselves and their families.

Public Sector and Education

The public sector added 458,000 jobs in 2001, almost all at the state and local levels. But with states now struggling to balance their budgets, layoff announcements have begun.

In 2001, the public sector's bright spot was education, with 87,000 new state jobs and 193,000 new local positions. Based on BLS estimates, more than 70 percent of these workers were teachers and teaching assistants; the remainder included bus drivers, administrators, custodians and others.

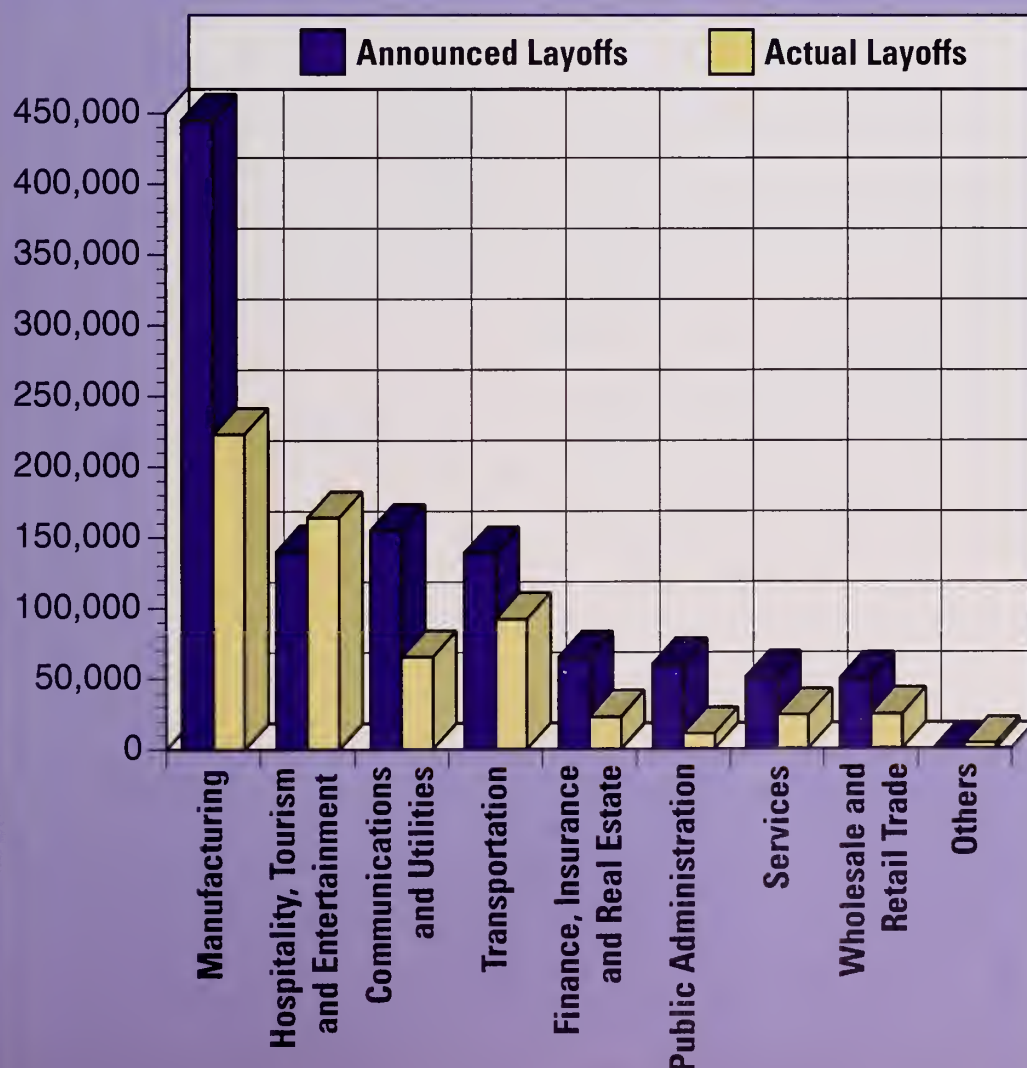
AFSCME, which helped 60,000 workers organize last year, enabled 3,500 University of Maryland employees gain a voice at work.

The AFT posts an average growth of 40,000 members a year, including teachers, teaching assistants and other school employees. And this year, "we'll continue to grow at the same pace or faster" says Phil Kugler, AFT director of organizing, "because we're talking with these groups not only about their economic interests but also their development as education professionals."

At the federal level, 400,000 jobs were lost through elimination or outsourcing during the economic expansion in the 1990s—and now the Bush administration has targeted another 425,000 federal jobs for outsourcing, according to Jacque Simon, AFGE public policy director. "Some will turn up as private jobs—but as nonunion positions where workers lack a voice and the due process rights that unions members have," she says. The union is responding with legislation that would give federal workers the right to compete for their jobs and compel private-public competition before work is outsourced.



Layoffs by Sector: Sept. 11, 2001, through Jan. 26, 2002



Health Care

With more than 300,000 new jobs created in 2001, the health care industry is among the few sectors showing significant job growth. "We've been seeing gains of up to 30,000 jobs a month, but going forward we'll probably see that fall back some because of federal Medicaid cut-backs and serious state and local budget shortfalls," says Baker.



Increased consumer demand, employers redoubling their cost-cutting efforts—and the hazardous and understaffed conditions that result—mean more health care workers, including highly skilled nurses, will be seeking a voice at work. Says Edmund Bronder, a senior policy fellow with the United American Nurses: “There is currently a shortage of experienced nurses available and willing to work in a restructured and downsized hospital environment. Unionization is a way to combat loss of power and control.” UAN estimates the share of nurse unionization with UAN and other unions, including SEIU, rose from less than 17 percent in 1998 to almost 20 percent in 2000.

David Kieffer, director of nursing home organizing at SEIU, which represents nurses and other health care workers, estimates

nursing home jobs grew by 37,000 in 2001, and SEIU helped 5,000 workers organize. This year, he predicts flat to modest growth in hiring—but more organizing wins. “The work has terrible working conditions and, for the most part, a labor relations model straight out of Dickens.”

Howard Croft, SEIU director of home health care, says more than 23,000 workers gained a voice on the job with SEIU in 2001, up from around 14,500 in 2000. He predicts the union will organize at least as many workers this year in 2001.

One new union member, home health care worker Barbara Tuson, is a member of SEIU Local 880, a 12,000-member Illinois home care union that fights to obtain legal changes enabling home care workers to gain a voice at work. Bargaining for the 133-member unit’s first contract has begun, with an eye to increasing the workers’ current pay of \$5.65 an hour for a six-day workweek.

“I was glad when the union came around,” recalls Tuson, a mother of four. “We had no paid vacation, no sick pay and no health insurance.”

“Congress intended the money to stabilize the industry, not to drive down wages.”

—AFA President Patricia Friend



Organizing: Despite the recession, the health care industry is growing—and unions such as SEIU Local 880 are working with home health care workers and others in the fight for a voice at work.

Transportation



Out of 199,000 transportation jobs lost last year, 127,000 were in air transport—the pilots, mechanics, flight attendants and others critical to the nation’s aviation industry. “We don’t see the industry beginning to rebound until late this year at the earliest,” says Steve Sleight, Machinists director of strategic resources. Dennis Dolan, first vice president of the Air Line Pilots, who has seen 4,500 members furloughed, believes “the industry can right itself by restoring consumer confidence.”

Members of ALPA, Flight Attendants, IAM and other unions are fighting industry and government efforts to balance the airlines’ books on workers’ backs. The airline stabilization board appointed by the Bush administration to parcel out \$10 billion in loans has said it will favor airlines that reduce costs—including workers’ salaries. “It’s really offensive,” says AFA President Patricia Friend. “Congress intended the money to stabilize the industry, not to drive down wages.”

Since Sept. 11, approximately 9,000 AFA members have been furloughed. Many of the large airlines that let them go also have cut flights, shifting routes to smaller, affiliate carriers. These carriers are hiring, but at “poverty wages—about 40 percent less than the majors pay,” says Friend. That’s where the AFA’s “Bridging the Gap” campaign comes in, says Friend, “to tell the public that flight atten-



“Bridging the Gap”: Flight Attendant Terri Owen turns out for union actions to demonstrate solidarity with the thousands of AFA members who have lost jobs since Sept. 11.

dants for regional carriers work just as hard as the rest of us do, and deserve the same pay.”

United Flight Attendant Terri Owen, an AFA Local 21 member based in Herndon, Va., has sufficient seniority not to worry about being furloughed. But she has turned out for “Bridging the Gap” actions to show solidarity. “By cutting jobs, the major airlines are shifting work to smaller ones that pay salaries we can’t live on,” she says. “It’s like taking manufacturing jobs out of the United States to countries where labor costs are much lower.” @

The Enronization of Social Security

By Laureen Lazarovici

Testifying at a U.S. Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee hearing, former Enron Corp. employee Janice Farmer became emotional when she described the plunge of her \$700,000 retirement fund to \$4,000 during the company's high-profile, allegedly corruption-ridden collapse. "I cannot help but feel that I and thousands of employees like me have been lied to and cheated," Farmer told the senators Dec. 18.

The 61-year-old widow finds comfort in the only retirement support she can count on: Social Security. In one year, she will begin receiving monthly checks from the nation's most successful family protection program. "It is extremely important for seniors to know they've got Social Security," said Farmer in a telephone interview from her Orlando, Fla., home. "I'm very thankful that Social Security is in my future." For now, Farmer is making ends meet by counting on a \$63 monthly pension check from a previous employer.

Farmer and 11,000 other Enron employees found out too late they could not count on the stock market or their employer for a guaranteed retirement—and if President George W. Bush and his corporate backers have their way, workers in the future may not even be able to count on Social Security.

Dismantling Social Security

During his campaign for president, Bush backed privatizing Social Security. Last May, he hand-picked a 16-member commission, asking them to come up with a



AP PHOTO/DENNIS COOK

Shattered: Former Enron employee Janice Farmer, 61, who lost her retirement savings in the company's collapse and will rely on Social Security, testified before Congress in December.

plan to convert the guaranteed, secure family protection program into a system that included individual stock market accounts. Headed by former U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and AOL/Time Warner executive Richard Parsons, the commission was made up solely of people who favored privatization.

In December, after meeting for seven months, the president's privatization com-

mission offered three options for turning a portion of the program that has never once missed a paycheck into a Wall Street gamble. The proposals either effectively raise the retirement age, cut benefits or both. "Each path would lead to the same bad results: reduction of benefits, deep financial risks for all beneficiaries and further jeopardy for minorities, persons with disabilities, women and low-income work-

While many view Social Security as a retirement program, working families also count on it as a disability and life insurance safety net: Fully 14 percent of Social Security recipients receive benefits because they have disabilities and another 16 percent are the surviving spouses or children of workers who have died.

ers," says Ed Coyle, executive director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, the union organization for retired workers.

Wall Street is among the biggest backers of privatization—and no wonder: Corporate oversight of Social Security would result in millions of dollars in fees for banks, insurance companies and investment firms. Administrative costs for private insurance policies offer a glimpse of what might be expected if Social Security were privatized. The costs range from 12 percent to 14 percent, according to the American Council of Life Insurers. By contrast, just 1 percent of Social Security funds go toward administration. Last summer, business groups dubbing themselves the Coalition for American Financial Security came together to launch a public relations campaign for privatization that *The Wall Street Journal* reported would cost \$20 million. But in the face of spirited protests from working families and seniors, the group backed off its plans.

Advocates for workers agree that private savings are an important part of retirement security. In fact, activists often describe workers' retirement security as a three-legged stool: personal savings, pensions and Social Security. All three need to be strong if workers are to have a dignified retirement after a long life of work—but all three are under attack by corporate interests. Of the three, only Social Security provides the core foundation that all workers can rely on.

For many years, employer-provided pensions took the form of defined-benefit plans, which are insured by the U.S. government and guarantee workers specific monthly benefits as long as they live after retirement. But about 20 years ago, employers increasingly shifted to programs such as 401(k)s, or defined-contribution plans, transferring the risk and burden of retirement saving to workers. Partially as a result, Social Security has become the

largest source of income for seniors: 63 percent of older Americans count on Social Security for half or more of their income, according to the Social Security Administration. But the commission's privatization scheme would siphon funds from the Social Security system, eroding the safety net for all workers—even those who chose not to open individual accounts.

Can't count on the stock market

The Enron debacle dramatically illustrates what can happen when corporations—largely unaccountable to the public and increasingly defiant of standards of acceptable behavior—choose greed over providing employees with job and retirement security. The company's spectacular bankruptcy and massive alleged corporate wrongdoing decimated workers' 401(k) funds. As the energy

retailer's stock value plummeted, executives cashed in but barred employees from selling company stock in their 401(k)s. And because lots of pension funds held Enron stocks, the retirement funds of thousands of other workers lost billions of dollars, too.

Yet even workers who don't face a corporatewide bankruptcy can't count on Wall Street for their retirement security: After four years of annual double-digit gains, the stock market began a steep decline two years ago, with the Standard & Poors 500 index dropping 9 percent in 2000 and 12 percent in 2001. A recent analysis of 8.3 million investors by the Investment Company Institute and the Employee Benefit Research Institute showed the average 401(k) retirement savings account shrank by 0.1 percent, or \$76, from 1999 to 2000. While the drop appears small, it was the first time a decline was recorded since 401(k) plans came into existence about 20 years ago. And for workers in their 60s who are preparing to retire on their accumulated retirement savings, the drop was much larger—eliminating 5.8 percent, or \$7,034, of a typical balance. In comparison, Social Security benefits rise with inflation and are guaranteed for a lifetime—providing safety that private investments can't match.

Strengthening Social Security: Working families have held rallies, forums and lobbied their members of Congress to ensure Social Security is strengthened and not made into a Wall Street gamble.



Privatizers aren't the only danger to the health of Social Security. In Feb. 4, President Bush released a federal budget proposal for 2003 that projects Washington will need to divert \$1.5 trillion in workers' Social Security payroll contributions to fund other programs over the next 10 years. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush promised to keep Social Security in a "lockbox" and not use it for other purposes. But Bush broke his promise in order to finance a \$1.6 trillion tax cut for the wealthy—almost the exact amount of Social Security money that he plans to use instead. A February *Los Angeles Times* poll found that 81 percent of the public opposes using Social Security revenue to fund future scheduled tax cuts. Check out www.aflcio.org for more on the Bush budget. @

Bush plan would raise retirement age, cut benefits

In its first few months, the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security met in venues open to the public. But after rallies by union activists and their allies demanding the commission strengthen, not dismantle, Social Security, commission members began gathering behind closed doors—using legal loopholes that allowed them to meet away from public scrutiny.

During these closed-door sessions, the commission arrived at recommendations that would cut benefits and force people to work longer in order to get full retirement benefits—while not addressing long-term funding for the program.

One plan effectively would raise the retirement age because it indexes the retirement age to longevity increases and creates penalties for retiring "early." By permanently cutting benefits to those who retire before they qualify for full benefits (the retirement age already is going up from 65 to 67 gradually under current law), the commission plans would penalize people in physically demanding careers and those who couldn't find work after losing their jobs.

Another of the commission's plans also would cut Social Security benefits by making a technical change in the way benefits are computed. Under that option, workers who are 28 years old today and retiring in 2040 would see their benefits shrink by about 30 percent, according to an analysis by the Institute for America's Future. Today's toddlers would suffer even more when they reach maturity: Their benefit cuts could be as high as 48 percent. "This is a drastic change in Social Security that would mean workers could no longer maintain the same standard of living in retirement as they had during their working years," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

The same "technicality" in that proposal would sharply reduce benefits to those who receive Social Security because they have disabilities or are survivors of workers who have died, ignoring Bush's promise to preserve these programs. While many view Social Security as a retirement program, working families also count on it as a disability and life insurance safety net. Fully 14 percent of Social Security recipients receive benefits because they become disabled on the job. Another 16 percent are the surviving spouses or children of workers who have died.

Even by eroding all these benefits, the commission's plans *still* wouldn't create sufficient funding to sustain the Social Security system. Analysts say the commission's partial privatization plan could drain the program of \$1 trillion during the next 10 years. The commission doesn't address how that cost would be met. Privatizers had hoped they could use the federal budget surplus to make up at least some of that loss. But in part because of Bush's \$1.6 trillion tax cut directed primarily to the wealthy, the United States faces a federal budget deficit throughout the decade. If only half of the money spent on the tax cut over the next 75 years

was spent on Social Security instead, the program would be financially solvent for that period, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

For more than three years, many corporations, industry groups and the politicians who share their agenda have had the luxury of trying to build support for privatizing Social Security without explaining how they were going to do it. Now, Bush's commission has unwittingly shown how destructive privatization would be.

"The commission report makes it clear that you can privatize Social Security only if you cut benefits and likely raise the retirement age," says Roger Hickey, executive director of the Institute for America's Future, which will launch a campaign urging congressional candidates to take a stand against the plan. "The commission is admitting privatization doesn't solve Social Security's problems but that it actually makes them much worse."

As privatizers met behind closed doors devising schemes to dismantle Social Security, families that had suffered devastating losses in the wake of Sept. 11 learned the importance of having a safety net they could count on in a time of crisis. Thousands of people—the children who lost a parent, the parent who lost a spouse, the worker who was left disabled—are entitled to Social Security benefits. The first of them received benefit checks Oct. 3. As many private charities scrambled to aid victims after Sept. 11, "the first checks people got were from the Social Security Administration," says Suzy Ballantyne, New York State AFL-CIO political director, who has been working with victims' families.

"Social Security is there for them when they need it." @

RESOURCES BOX

Book: The top experts on Social Security come together and argue forcefully on behalf of benefits for working families in *The Future of the Safety Net: Social Insurance and Employee Benefits*, edited by AFL-CIO Senior Economist Sheldon Friedman and David Jacobs. \$29.95. Cornell University Press, 607-277-2211, www.cornellpress.cornell.edu.

Online calculator: Find out how much money you would lose if Social Security were privatized with an online calculator from the National Council of Women's Organizations. Click on www.women4socialsecurity.org/sscalc4/calculator.htm, enter your year of birth and earnings and hit the "calculate" button.

Downloadable flier: Don't want to work 'til 70 just so privatizers can reap millions from administering private accounts? Mobilize fellow union and community activists by downloading an attention-grabbing flier from the AFL-CIO's Working Families Toolkit online flier program at www.aflcio.org/workingfamielstoolkit/ss.pdf. @

'If We Unite in This Struggle, We Will Prevail'

Workers from around
the world share their

stories of global

economic injustice

STORIES COMPILED
BY JAMES B. PARKS

S EVEN WORKERS from around the world gathered at the AFL-CIO Working Families Economic Forum in New York City, where they described working in a global economy that makes the world's rich even richer while lowering the standard of living for working families.

The Jan. 31 event coincided with the kickoff of the World Economic Forum, a behind-closed-doors meeting of 2,500 elite international business and political leaders seeking to shape the global economy. The group traditionally holds its annual forum at the Swiss ski resort of Davos, but moved the meeting to New York City this year, where an unprecedented number of the world's union leaders, including AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and five other U.S. union leaders, took part.

"Many of the business and world leaders meeting down the street dismiss the concerns being expressed here today," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, who moderated the workers' forum. "The backlash against globalization, they say, just stems from an image problem. All you have to do is listen to these workers and their stories to know this is not an image problem—it's a reality problem."

Through their stories, a Guatemalan garment worker, a UAW member, a Chinese human rights activist, a U.S. steelworker, a sewing machine operator, a Mexican maquiladora worker and a New York bartender describe the common bonds they share while vividly conveying the reality of the global economy.



Global injustice: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka listens as Agnes Wong describes being laid-off in New York's garment industry.



Brazil forum: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson (not pictured) led a delegation of U.S. unionists to the World Social Forum in Brazil, held simultaneously with the World Economic Forum as an alternative for working people.



Sofia Sazo

Sofia Sazo

became committed to helping garment workers win justice on the job after experiencing abusive, unsafe and intolerable working conditions in Guatemala's maquiladoras for 10 years. She now is an organizer with the FESTRAS Maquila Organizing Project, sponsored by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation. She describes her experience working in the Shin Won garment plant, a contractor for the GAP and Polo Ralph Lauren, where she made sweatshirts and blouses.

"From the beginning, it was tiring and at times humiliating. They forced us to work overtime and we had to because we had children to support. They never asked us, they just told us to stay. Sometimes we had to stay until four in the morning and we only had time to go home to bathe and then come back by seven in the morning. We worked about 12 to 15 hours every day. They pay us every 15 days, and since I generally worked 50 hours overtime, in that two-week period, my pay was 900 quetzales [about \$112.50 in U.S. dollars].

"We weren't free to go to the bathroom when we wanted to. Instead, we had to ask for a pass. Once we got to the bathroom, there was a guard who monitored us to make sure we didn't spend more than five minutes there. If we spent more than five minutes in the bathroom, we got a warning letter.

"When we came to work in the morning they searched us. The search was even more thorough when we left. It was humiliating; they touched us all over our bodies. But one has to work. And that is why I am here today—to help my fellow workers have a dignified work and to remember that we are all human beings." @

Russ Sheffler

, a member of Steelworkers Local 1157 in Cleveland, recently was laid off from LTV Steel Co. Inc. after 28 years on the job when the company declared bankruptcy. Like many steelworkers devastated by the crisis in the U.S. steel industry, he faces an uncertain future and insecure retirement. Foreign countries continue to dump their excess below-market-cost steel into the United States, causing the domestic steel industry to suffer serious setbacks: 30 steel companies have declared bankruptcy since Dec. 31, 1997, 12 plants have closed and 34,000 steelworkers have lost their jobs.

"I was in Seattle [for the World Trade Organization protests in November 1999]. Until then, I didn't realize how bad it was in other parts of the world. I think Seattle opened a lot of eyes in this country. People came from other countries to fight for social change, worker rights, environmental stands. We take this stuff for granted in this country.

"Some of our corporate leaders would rather leave this country, go to another country, exploit that workforce because they don't have to spend that extra money. I think it's a shame. It's a crime and some of these CEOs should be in jail.

"These corporations don't want to lift the living standards...they want to bring us down to their standards. Let's be on a level playing field with these other countries. Let the other citizens of the world come to our level of living." @



Russ Sheffler

JIM TYNNAN

Rogelio Salas, a

Mexican immigrant, was a bartender at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, where he worked for Restaurant Associates before his company fired him in January while trying to form a union with the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees to win livable wages and affordable health care.

"It is sad to see the rich getting richer and working people not getting any benefits from it. When I go back to visit Mexico, I see that globalization is an invasion....It brings slavery and poverty. We have to stop blaming the people who cross the border to get a job.

"Americans are being left behind like we were. Companies like Ford are not closing down, they are moving down [to Mexico] to save more money. It is time to take action. The government is doing something for Enron. Why can't they do something for the workers?" @

JIM TYNNAN



Rogelio Salas

Joseph Robinson

UAW member worked for Ford Motor Co. in Edison, N.J.—the same plant where his father worked—until January, when he and his co-workers learned from a television report that Ford planned to close their plant and lay off 1,500 workers. Robinson, whose first child was born in late January, says he is luckier than some laid-off U.S. workers because he has a union contract that guarantees severance pay and placement by seniority in other Ford plants.

"Edison is a small town made up mostly of middle-class working families. Without Ford in Edison, Edison will deteriorate, because Ford supports all the other businesses in the town.

"When I started at Ford two-and-a-half years ago...one of the human resources managers told us that if you come to work every day, you will make an honest dollar and provide a warm and secure place for your family. Now, the story is changed. Now they're saying 'we're closing Edison and if you're not fortunate enough to be placed somewhere else [because you have a union contract]...we don't have anything for you.'" @

JIM TYNNAN



Joseph Robinson



Agnes Wong

UNITE member **Agnes Wong** has been a sewing machine operator in New York's Chinatown since 1974, when she immigrated from Hong Kong. She recently was laid off when the sewing contractor she worked for closed down after Sept. 11.

"I feel so sad for the workers [like Sofia] who are abused, working long hours, with low income and no human rights or labor rights. I can tell that the big companies and their retainers are looking for cheaper quarters.

No matter where they go they will not escape.

They should treat workers there like they treat workers here. We have a union.

"We hope government and business leaders who come to the meeting this week set up fair global trade policies that let all workers have a better chance to work. Workers want work and fair pay any place in this world. No matter which country they live in, they don't want sweatshops.

"At least 20 percent to 30 percent of garment workers in New York work in sweatshops. They work eight to 10 hours a day. Sometimes they make \$2 an hour or less. If they try to go out and talk about a union, they will lose their jobs.

"You can see on TV and in the newspaper thousands in line to collect 9-11 emergency funds in Chinatown. Eighty percent are women, garment workers. There is no work at all because the employers are looking for cheaper labor." @

Santiago Perez Meza was fired from the Mexmode maquiladora in Adlixco, Mexico, which makes clothing for Nike, after he and four other union supporters led a walkout last year over unsafe conditions at the plant. The firings led to a strike by the workers, who received support from UNITE, the AFL-CIO American Center for International Labor Solidarity, the anti-sweatshop groups Worker Rights Consortium and United Students Against Sweatshops and community leaders. In a rare victory, the plant owners—Korean-based Kukdong—agreed to recognize the workers' choice of an independent union.

"The company sent around a letter telling us a [government-controlled] union would be coming in and we had to affiliate with it or we would be fired. The union was not there to protect the workers, it was there to protect the factory. The requests we made to the union were ignored. The requests were simple: food in the cafeteria that was not rotten... and to be able to go to the doctor when we got sick. We asked that the managers didn't yell at us or hit us.

"Forming an independent union that really represents workers was hard work...and we hope other workers in Mexico recognize that they, too, can form an independent union.

"The victories that we won are not ours alone, but yours as well. It is not important what one's race or nationality is...together we can move forward. If we unite in this struggle, we will prevail." @



Santiago Perez Meza



Han Dong Fang

Han Dong Fang spent several years in Chinese prisons during a government clamp-down on the country's pro-democracy movement. After the Beijing native contracted tuberculosis in jail, he came to the United States for treatment and moved to Hong Kong in 1993 to continue fighting for workers' rights. That year, he received the AFL-CIO George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights award. He founded *The China Labor Bulletin* and hosts a radio call-in show on Radio Free Asia.

"In January, a 19-year-old girl [from China] called my radio show. She works in a toy factory. Just before Christmas, they worked an average of 16 hours a day, seven days a week, making less than 20 cents an hour. The toys are exported to the United States for Wendy's and Kentucky Fried Chicken Corp. restaurants.

"She told me they have regulations about washing their hands after they use the toilet. It says because the toys probably will be played with by children in the United States under 3 years of age and it is very easy for them to catch disease. So we have to guarantee the health of children in the United States under 3 years old and that is why we have to wash our hands so many times.

"Before Christmas, a group of Americans came to the factory [to monitor compliance with agreed-upon codes of conduct]. And she said the bosses told the workers if they said too much, they would be fired.

"No matter who the bosses are, they are coming to China to make themselves money, not, as they say, to bring democracy to China." @

LIKE IT IS

Targeting Terrorism or Workers' Rights?

The assault on workers' rights by governments around the world continued unabated last year—and some leaders are using the guise of fighting terrorism to clamp down on political dissent and workers' rights, according to human rights advocates.

The *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*, an annual global survey, finds workers' rights are abused around the world, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. The most common abuses of internationally recognized labor rights include the worst forms of child labor, employment discrimination and violations of the freedom to join a union:

- In Ecuador, children as young as 8 labor for long hours on banana plantations in unsafe and unhealthy working conditions. In Guatemala, women workers in the maquila sector often are fired after they become pregnant.

- In Mexico, organizing efforts frequently are hindered by collective bargaining agreements negotiated between management and pro-business, nonindependent "company" unions. In other cases, employers hire subcontractors and "permanent temporary" workers to avoid bargaining with workers.

- Colombia led the world in assassinations of trade unionists, with 112 killed in 2000 and 125 killed in the first 10 months of 2001.

Meanwhile, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, made up of 225 affiliated organizations in 148 countries and territories, has released a report in which it finds Pakistan has an "abominable disrespect for labor standards."

"All the core labor standards have been violated massively and flagrantly, in defiance of international condemnation,



Child labor: These children making containers at a metal recycling shop in Eritrea are among millions of the world's citizens whose human and labor rights are being violated.

for many years," ICFTU says in a January 2002 report to the World Trade Organization on Pakistan's labor policies.

ICFTU charges Pakistan with denying the freedom to organize to all workers employed in international trade export zones, using forced labor and allowing rampant use of child labor.

In a separate report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ICFTU cites 10 countries where trade union members have been targeted because of their union activities. These include Belarus, Burma, Brazil, China, Colombia, Djibouti, Guatemala, Haiti, the Republic of Korea and Swaziland.

Human Rights Watch also found a cynical twist in the way some governments deny workers their rights: They are using the

terrorist attacks of Sept. 11—which killed thousands of workers and left thousands more jobless—to justify cracking down on groups that support workers' rights.

In India, for example, the president bypassed the parliament and signed a measure in October that broadly defines terrorism to include acts of violence or disruption of essential services, such as strikes.

Defending workers' rights around the world is critical to the success of the war against terrorism, says Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch. To defeat the fundamental amorality of terrorism requires a firm grounding in human and workers' rights.

"The fight against terror isn't just a matter of security," he says. "It's a matter of values. Terrorists believe that anything goes in the name of their cause. The fight against terror must not buy into that logic. Human rights and workers' rights principles must not be compromised in the name of any cause." @

—James B. Parks

For more on the *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*, visit www.hrw.org/wr2k2.

The ICFTU reports, *Internationally Recognized Core Labor Standards in Pakistan* and the report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, are available at www.icftu.org.

Jekyll, Hyde or Linda Chavez?

Last year, the Bush administration's nomination of ultraconservative newspaper columnist Linda Chavez to head the U.S. Department of

Labor drew fire from unions and then self-destructed amidst allegations that an undocumented worker lived with Chavez, performing unpaid housework.

After the Bush administration's withdrawal of her nomination, Chavez said on CNN's "Wolf Blitzer Reports"

that unions had been mistaken when they "thought I was going to be their worst nemesis."

But early this year, Chavez mailed an eight-page diatribe against unions as part of her

fund-raising effort to pass a national paycheck deception law that would eliminate workers' participation in the political process. In it, she stated explicitly that she is the union movement's "worst nightmare," and went on to equate union leaders with Osama bin Laden, saying, "Don't let the terrorists have another victory." Chavez also seems to have forgotten the reason her withdrawal was canned when she said "labor pulled out the stops to defeat" her nomination.

Her fund-raising missive includes a letter of support from Edwin Meese, U.S. attorney general in the Reagan administration—the same Meese who was seen last fall attempting to wrestle a bull-horn from a union member as dozens of activists rallied on public property outside a seminar at The Heritage Foundation on paycheck deception. @



AP PHOTO/FILE

About face: A not-so-worker-friendly Chavez targets unions and their members.

Workers' Rights: More than History

When the film "10,000 Black Men Named George" aired on Showtime in February, members of Electrical Workers Local 21 found it more than ironic that one of the sponsors of the saga depicting union leader A. Philip Randolph was AT&T.

For four years, AT&T Broadband has refused to negotiate a first contract with the 700 IBEW members—whose Chicago local union helped workers unionize in the historic Pullman district where Randolph assisted thousands of porters in gaining a voice at work in the 1930s and 1940s.

Dozens of union members,

their allies in the civil rights community—and two costumed "Pullman porters"—turned out at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry in February during the movie's premier, distributing leaflets that called on AT&T Broadband to "quit hiding behind the mask of sponsorship and honor the legacy of A. Philip Randolph by respecting the rights of workers in the Pullman district of Chicago to organize a union."

Norman Hill, president of the AFL-CIO constituency group the A. Philip Randolph Institute, joined in the leaflet-



RENAE MANLEY

Negotiate now: A "Pullman porter," portrayed by Jerry Rankin, joined APRI President Norman Hill (right), and IBEW members to protest AT&T's empty, feel-good actions.

Going for the Gold

Among the many powerful displays of unity and courage in the 2002 Winter Games last month were union activists' powerful shows of Olympic spirit.

First, Indonesian activist Dita Sari, who was released in 1999 after spending four years in prison for her unionization efforts at a plant that makes shoes for Adidas and Reebok, turned down an expense-paid trip to the games in Salt Lake City. Sari, one of this year's Reebok Human Rights Award winners, had hoped to attend the ceremony, where she would refuse the award while at the podium and describe how workers at the five Reebok-contracted plants in Indonesia are paid \$1.50 a day to produce shoes that cost U.S. consumers hundreds of dollars.

But when Sari learned Reebok intended to schedule her and other recipients for



AP PHOTO/CHARLES DHARAPAK

Olympic spirit: Indonesian activist Dita Sari refused to be used as a corporate pawn for Reebok during last month's Olympics.

public events before the actual award ceremony, she refused to attend, rather than let Reebok benefit from her presence.

At the same time, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which represents 157 million workers in 225 affiliated organizations in 148 countries, called on the International Olympic Committee to investigate official Olympic Games clothing supplier "Marker" for reportedly making in Burma the official uniforms of Olympic torchbearers.

The International Labor Organization and other fact-finding groups estimate that 11 million Burma citizens are subject to forced labor, often in the construction of military installations and roads. "The International Olympic Committee should immediately act to disassociate itself from those trading with tyranny in Burma and reaffirm the historic values of the Olympic Games," says ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder. For a list of companies with links to Burma, visit www.global-unions.org/burma. @

ing, telling workers: "If Asa [Randolph] was here, he would be right with you." @

EXHIBIT

“Witnesses and Warriors: The Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936–1937,” an exhibit featuring the portraits of 20 sit-down strikers, along with excerpts from their oral histories, will be at the George Meany Memorial Archives in Silver Spring, Md., through May 31, 2002. The artists who created the portraits in various media are students, alumni and faculty of Mott Community College and residents and natives of Flint, Mich. The college’s faculty initiated the portrait project in 1998 as a community outreach project. The George Meany Memorial Archives is located at 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. For more information, please call 301-431-5451. @

PUBLICATIONS



Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor’s Last Century, by

Howard Zinn, Dana Frank and Robin D.G. Kelley, puts into sharp focus the lessons of three great battles in union history. Zinn writes in detail about the Colorado coal strike of 1913–1914 and its brutal conclusion in the Ludlow Massacre. Frank describes a sit-down strike by 108 young women in Detroit at Woolworth’s Five and Dime, the Wal-Mart of its time. Kelley examines the 1936 effort by movie theater musicians to sustain their jobs in the face of new technology—“talking” movies. \$23. Beacon Press, www.beacon.org.



Murals: Great Walls of Joliet, by Jeff Huebner, presents many of the murals created since 1991 through the Friends of Community Public Art program in Joliet, Ill. It includes more than 80 large outdoor murals, mosaics and sculptures by a variety of artists over the past 25 years. As tributes to the diversity and culture of Joliet and its industries, these portraits form a shared public history. “Joliet Limestone: Our Canals and Quarries” features the demand of the Knights of Labor at its Labor Day parade in 1886: “8 hours labor, 8 hours recreation, 8 hours rest.” \$21.95. University of Illinois Press, www.press.uillinois.edu/s01/huebner.html. @

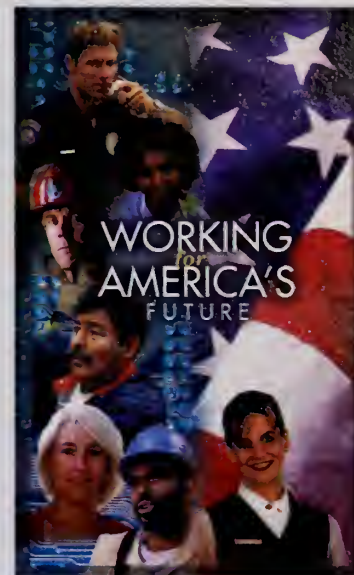
WORKERS’ NEWS SERVICE

The just-launched **Workers Independent News Service (WINS)** seeks to bring balanced news coverage to the airwaves by offering news and features to the nation’s 12,000 AM and FM radio stations. WINS works directly with unions and grassroots activists to report on union organizing and bargaining, workplace issues, union and community activities and coalition campaigns on local radio stations. The service offers unions and community organizations training and assistance in the technical aspects of reporting, radio production and media relations. For more information and a sample of WINS radio news, visit www.laborradio.org. @

CONFERENCES

The AFL-CIO Working for America Institute’s annual conference, **Working for America’s Future**, April 20–23 in Philadelphia, will focus on the recession’s impact on workforce and economic development. Union leaders, government officials, community activists, scholars, educators and workforce development experts will consider strategies and new initiatives for building a stronger economy and providing good jobs for workers. At a special grant-writing workshop for union members, union leaders can exchange ideas about state-based, union-led efforts to help displaced workers. The conference is co-sponsored by the WAI, the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO and Philadelphia Council of the AFL-CIO. For more information, visit www.workingforamerica.org or call the WAI at 202-974-8100.

Participants at the annual **National Conference for Labor Representatives in the Health Care Industry** in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., April 14–16 will examine issues of organizing, collective bargaining and public policy relating to hospital and health care workers. The conference will feature eight workshops, panel discussions on working together on bargaining issues, labor law and bargaining unit determination and negotiation of nurse staffing issues. The event is co-sponsored by 11 AFL-CIO unions, the labor education programs of Michigan State University’s School of Labor and Industrial Relations and the University of Illinois’ Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations. For more information, contact Catherine Lundy at Michigan State University, phone 517-353-4464, e-mail (lundy@pilot.msu.edu), or Ron Peters at the University of Illinois, phone 217-333-0980, e-mail (m-hayes7@uiuc.edu). @



WEBSIGHTINGS

www.e-tradeunions.org—Spearheaded by e-tradeunions.org, a collaborative resource initiated by the webmasters and communicators of several national and international labor organizations, this website is an online help desk designed specifically for Web workers at trade unions. Available in English, Spanish, French and German, the site’s key feature is “Get an Answer,” with answers to questions commonly asked by union Web workers seeking to improve their websites.

www.rwjf.org—The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provides grants to organizations focused on assuring all Americans have access to basic affordable health care, improving care and support for people with chronic health conditions, promoting healthy communities and lifestyles and reducing substance abuse. The organization’s website provides information on the criteria and applications for new grants, resource publications and links and recent health-related news and events. @

MOURN for the Dead

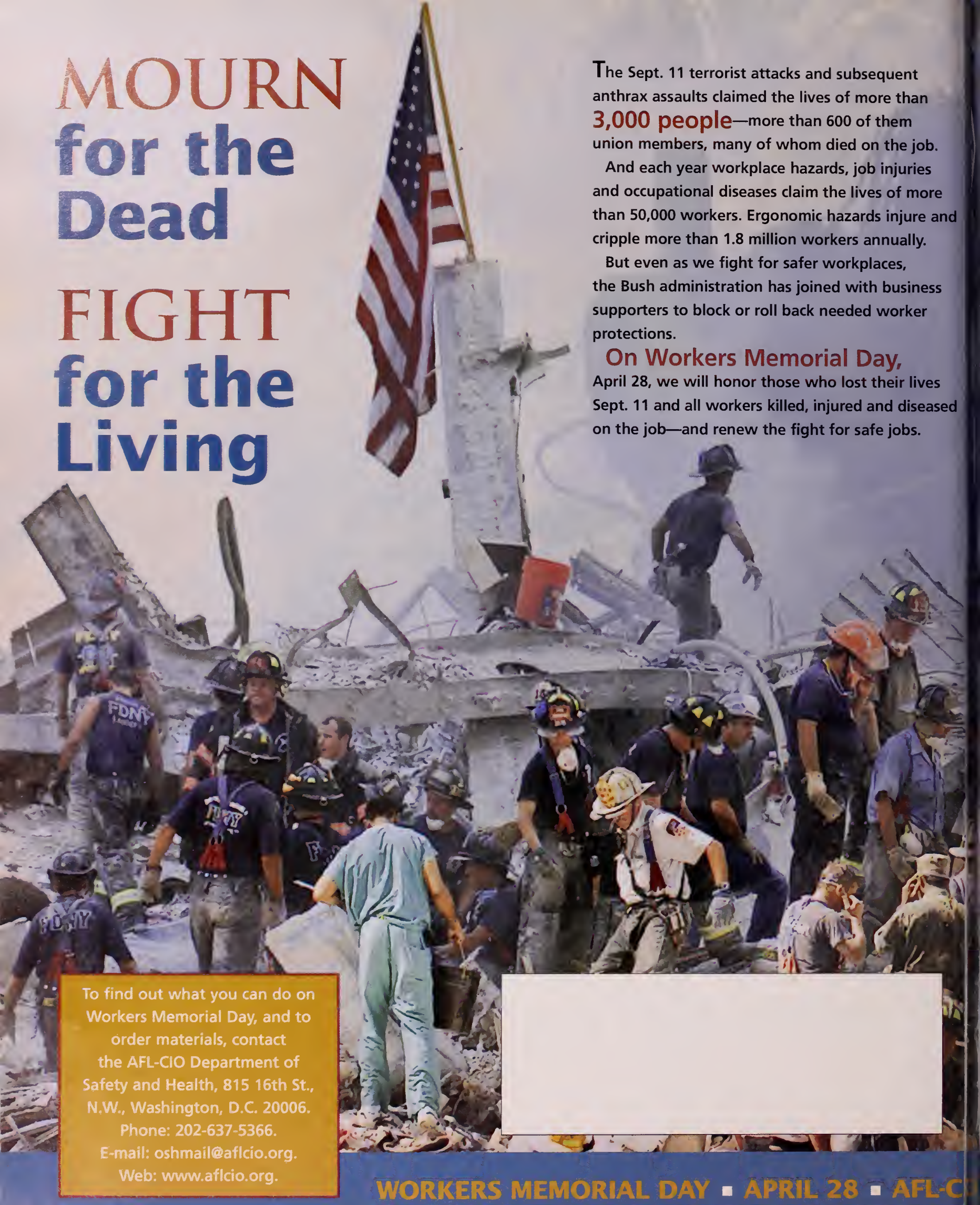
FIGHT for the Living

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and subsequent anthrax assaults claimed the lives of more than **3,000 people**—more than 600 of them union members, many of whom died on the job.

And each year workplace hazards, job injuries and occupational diseases claim the lives of more than 50,000 workers. Ergonomic hazards injure and cripple more than 1.8 million workers annually.

But even as we fight for safer workplaces, the Bush administration has joined with business supporters to block or roll back needed worker protections.

On Workers Memorial Day, April 28, we will honor those who lost their lives Sept. 11 and all workers killed, injured and diseased on the job—and renew the fight for safe jobs.



To find out what you can do on Workers Memorial Day, and to order materials, contact the AFL-CIO Department of Safety and Health, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.
Phone: 202-637-5366.
E-mail: oshmail@aflcio.org.
Web: www.aflcio.org.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY ■ APRIL 28 ■ AFL-CIO

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

APRIL/MAY 2002

America @work

"Ruthlessness, callousness and
arrogance don't belong here."
—Enron Code of Ethics

Enron *This!*

ALSO INSIDE:

Laborers—
Building an
Organizing Model

"IN REGARD TO a recent newspaper article, 'Many Firms Face Increased Pension Liability,' AFL-CIO Senior Policy Analyst Shaun O'Brien stated companies are trying to cover themselves for market losses. He's exactly right. Employers want retirees and future retirees to pick up the cost. Please don't support any new way to calculate retirements. I and tens of thousands of others have worked many years and look forward to an unreduced retirement."

—Dana Hardman, Louisville, Ky.

SAY WHAT?

How is your union addressing issues of corporate accountability?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afclcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

ABOUT HOW YOUR UNION IS AIDING MEMBERS DURING THE ECONOMIC RECESSION:

"AFTER SEPT. 11, HOTEL

Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 2 used the clout we have with the [San Francisco] Hotel Multi-Employer Group to secure a six-month extension of medical benefits. We partnered with the AFL-CIO Community Services and the San Francisco Labor Council to form the San Francisco Workers' Relief Assistance Program, funded by the Local 2 Union Trust Fund, the California Endowment and private donations. Through this program, we distributed food, aiding about 1,100 families twice a month; conducted a toy drive at Christmas to provide holiday gifts for 1,200 children of laid-off members; and hired laid-off members to run the relief assistance program."—*Tho Do, secretary-treasurer, HERE Local 2, San Francisco*

"I TRAVELED FROM Portage, Ind., to [Washington, D.C.,] to attend the Steelworkers' rally [on Feb. 28]. I feared that the most frustrating part would be trying to figure how to get around. To my great appreciation, the AFL-CIO help[ed] out-of-towners like myself get to the rally safely and promptly. Every person I came across had a smile and a nice thing to say to us as we passed. I was very impressed and thankful....It is so easy at times to sit in your own little local and forget there are others who are in this fight with you....How nice it was to also see my brothers and sisters in labor turn out to support, encourage and lend a hand on that day. Thank you to all the men and women of the AFL-CIO for giving me and many others the rekindled spirit that is the union movement. I thought I was alone, but in one day, I was reminded that thousands share my plight and will share in the rebirth of our industrial base."—*Gary Markley, Portage, Ind., USWA Local 8985*

"PLEASE DO NOT allow Enron's creditors and past executives to get away with cheating the laid-off workers out of their legitimate rights to a fair severance pay. Keep up the fine work the unions do and have done in the past! The workers in this country would not have today what they enjoy if it were not for joining together to guide business in the fair and just direction. Do not let the political regime and Big Business break the unions and keep sending jobs overseas!"

—*Donald Johnson, Coolidge, Ga., Communications Workers of America Local 3204*

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America@work

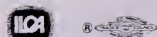
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CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

HERE rebounds from Sept. 11
A New Alliance in Colorado
Steelworkers fight on

22 OUT THERE

Ad busting the union-busters
CWA scores at Pebble Beach
The virtual apprentice

23 HOMEPAGE

Publications: *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*
Packinghouse Daughter: A Memoir
Travel: STITCH delegation to Guatemala
Training: Organizing seminar
Music: "Fanning the Flames of Discontent," by General Strike
Concert: Billy Bragg and the Blokes on tour
Union gear: Union-proud T-shirts to aid in rebuilding New York City's apparel industry

8

LABORERS: BUILDING AN ORGANIZING MODEL

By shifting resources to organizing, reaching out to community allies and using its political clout, LIUNA is joining with a primarily immigrant workforce to win dignity and respect on the job

10

ENRON THIS!

A giant multinational corporation goes bankrupt. Thousands of workers lose their jobs, their pensions and their future. But top corporate executives walk away with millions. *America@work* takes a look at how we became an Enron Nation—and strategies for unions and their members to take back the economy

11

The Enron Economy

The Enron debacle highlights the all-too-common keys to corporate conduct in the New Economy: unfettered deregulation of entire industries, privatization of vital government services, business operations moved overseas and stockholder-driven profit at the expense of consumers and employees

13

'Rotten to Its Corporate Core'

Across the board, Enron provides a case study in the worst practices of corporate governance—and showcases why union action in boardrooms and at the bargaining table is essential now more than ever

16

No Way to Retire

Enron is not alone among companies shifting employee pension plans into risky 401(k)s—and unions and their members are taking steps to negotiate secure pension plans while strengthening Social Security

18

Deep Pockets and Old Boy Ties

Corporate contributions and top-level Washington, D.C., connections paid off big for Enron in the form of tax breaks, deregulation of the energy industry—and a voice in shaping the nation's future

21

Resources for Action

Websites and other resources to inform working families about Enron and its implications

Job One: Job Security

Job security is emerging as the top priority for unions involved in major contract talks this year.

Union negotiators at the Communications Workers of America and the Electrical Workers say they are seeking

in April, are focusing on strategies for the industry to implement new technology without endangering jobs.

Under the banner "Whatever It Takes," the Teamsters are mobilizing members and community allies to gain a fair contract at United Parcel Service that addresses the loss of union jobs through subcontracting and forced overtime. The current UPS contract covering 210,000 full- and part-time employees expires July 31. "We want to have UPS put their money where their mouth is," IBT President James P. Hoffa told 700 union members at a March 3 rally in St. Louis, one of several the union held throughout the country to educate members about the bargaining issues. To keep up with the UPS talks, visit www.trakups.org.

In aerospace, the 2,300 Machinists at Lockheed Martin Corp.'s Marietta, Ga., plant walked out March 11 after rejecting management's final offer. Union jobs at the Marietta plant have declined from 7,000 in 1990, even as the company has gained lucrative new contracts—including a \$200 billion deal to build nearly 3,000 Joint Strike Fighter warplanes. Nearly half the work on the new warplanes has been contracted out to nonunion operations, according to union leaders. For more information on the strike, visit www.iamaw.org.

Meanwhile, IAM members at United Airlines ratified a new five-year pact that gives top-scale mechanics a 37 percent raise, their first wage increase since 1994. The agreement was reached Feb. 18 after two years of negotiations. @

guarantees in their current talks with AT&T that union members will be trained for and moved into new jobs being created by technology and mergers. "CWA members want AT&T to succeed and want to remain a vital part of this company," says CWA President Morton Bahr. "But by slashing jobs and contracting out work to low-pay, high-turnover operations, AT&T is jeopardizing quality service and that's a real disservice to employees and customers."

The impact of technology on jobs also is playing a key role in bargaining between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association. Those negotiations, launched



Seeking a fair deal: Teamsters President James P. Hoffa addresses a union rally in St. Louis.

A New Alliance in Colorado

When Colorado union activists mobilized to help working family-friendly candidates win crucial state Senate seats in 2000, many unionists celebrated the victories as "the Colorado miracle." On March 9, union leaders in the Rocky Mountain State built on that winning foundation by launching a New Alliance plan, an initiative designed to revitalize state federations and central labor councils so they can better harmonize organizing, legislative and political action.

Meeting in Denver, union leaders mapped out strategies to create a neighborhood-based political activist network, coordinate multiunion organizing blitzes propelled by union members and reach out to community allies.

"This convocation is about a first step to power," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who addressed the Colorado activists.

Union leaders in New York, North Carolina and Maryland/District of Columbia launched New Alliance efforts last year. Oregon activists are scheduled to take up plans on May 4. @



Celebration: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson joins CWA Local 7777 member Tim Marquez and other Colorado union activists.

Jobless Safety Net in Shreds

Some 356,000 Americans exhausted their 26-week regular unemployment benefits without receiving any additional aid in January, the largest number on record since data became available in 1973, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Although Congress passed a 13-week extension of unemployment insurance benefits in early March, a new report shows that extending unemployment benefits helps some workers but does not fix basic problems in a system that has stranded many. Fewer than 40 percent of workers can collect unemployment insurance because of outdated eligibility rules, according to *Failing the Unemployed: A State-by-State Examination of Unemployment*

Insurance Systems—and workers who do collect unemployment find, on average, it replaces only 33 percent of their previous weekly wages.

The AFL-CIO and a coalition of watchdog groups released the report March 12, the day unemployment benefits expired for workers laid off Sept. 11. The same day, more than 35 AFL-CIO state federations announced campaigns to help jobless workers.

Bush's recent efforts to shift all unemployment insurance program administrative costs onto the states will "exacerbate the shortfalls that this report points out already exist and make the national situation worse," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Visit www.aflcio.org for state-by-state reports. @

Steelworkers Fight On to Save Steel

SPOTLIGHT

Steelworkers and their allies are mobilizing to fight for congressional legislation that will protect the health care benefits of 600,000 retirees whose benefits remain at risk.

After more than 25,000 USWA members traveled to the nation's capital in 419 buses

and 500 cars to participate in a Feb. 28 "Stand Up for Steel" rally in the shadow of the White House, President George W. Bush announced he would impose tariffs of up to 30 percent for three years on most imported steel.

But Bush failed to address the long-standing problem of funding retiree health care. "It is important to heal the steel companies, but it is just as important to heal the workers," says USWA President Leo Gerard.

Since Dec. 31, 1997, 32 U.S. steel companies have declared bankruptcy and 17 have shut down completely, primarily because of illegal dumping, Gerard says. A portion of USWA's pensions resulting from shutdowns are guaranteed by the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., but the health care benefits of retirees and their surviving spouses are wiped out completely when a company liquidates. @



Strong as steel: USWA President Leo Gerard addresses members at a Washington, D.C., rally.



Solidarity

Transport Workers President Sonny Hall talks with Julia Hernandez and her son, Saul, whose husband and father, Antonio Melendez, was one of 43 Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees killed Sept. 11 at the World Trade Center. TWU members honored those 43 HERE Local 100 members by giving each family \$1,500 from the TWU Heroes Fund. @

HERE Rebounds from Sept. 11

The crisis in the nation's hotel industry after Sept. 11 cut deeply into the ranks of the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees, but through aggressive organizing and union solidarity, the union is regaining momentum.

"Sept. 11 was a tragedy for our members as well as the nation as a whole," says HERE General President John Wilhelm. "The best way to honor the memories of the victims is to build the union—and that's what we're doing."

Forty-three HERE members died in the World Trade Center and thousands more—about one-third of HERE's membership—were laid off in the economic aftermath of the attacks. Many are returning to work as the tourism industry begins to rebound, but thousands still are out of work.

In the months after Sept. 11, HERE members continued organizing and developing ways to spread the union message, enabling 2,000 workers across the country to get a voice at work at eight hotels in New York City, Baltimore, San Francisco and Miami.



Back in action: HERE members celebrate a voice at work at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco.

All the wins came through card-checks, in which the employer agrees to recognize the union when a majority of workers sign union authorization cards. HERE Local 26 also negotiated a citywide card-check neutrality agreement in Boston.

Although some 1,500 HERE Local 2 members were laid off in San Francisco immediately after Sept. 11, the union was not disheartened. "It just gave us more incentive to organize," says Local 2 Secretary-Treasurer Tho Do. Union leaders set up food banks and helped the mostly immigrant workers pay for medical insurance for six months. The relief effort had a significant impact on organizing, Do says. When the members saw their union standing up for them, they were willing to help in organizing activities, she says.

In New York City, the New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council won a card-check at the Marriott Renaissance Hotel because of strong union solidarity, says Jim Donovan, HERE Local 6 organizing director. "We had a very courageous and determined employee committee," Donovan says. "They know the value of a union and they wanted to be a part of it." @

Federal Workers on the Front Lines

Although the recent American Customer Satisfaction Index shows government service providers top private industry in customer satisfaction ratings, federal workers face the prospect of losing



their jobs because of a series of actions by the Bush administration promoting contracting-out and privatization of government jobs. In its *State of the Federal Work Force* report, issued Jan. 30, AFGE says the White House randomly con-

tracted-out 425,000 federal jobs and revoked a longstanding policy to allow agencies to sign contracts with companies that have broken environmental, civil rights and labor laws.

"It's unfortunate that AFGE will once again have to fight the pay parity battle on Capitol Hill," says AFGE President Bobby Harnage Sr., "when we should be working with Congress to improve the federal government's ability to protect the American public."

To raise awareness of the crucial role of federal employees, AFGE is distributing a new poster depicting federal employees performing such jobs as fighting fires, while noting government employees "are always on the job for our nation." @

A Painful Anniversary

Since March 20, 2001—when President George W. Bush signed legislation repealing the nation's ergonomics standard—more than 1.8 million workers have suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome and other ergonomics injuries. Despite vows from the administration to implement a new ergonomics policy, to date those promises are unfulfilled.

"It is not our intention to delay this matter indefinitely," U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Elaine Chao said in a November 2001, letter to Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) in which she



promised ergonomics action later that year.

The Bush administration did not act before the end of year and Chao has asked for postponement of several scheduled Senate hearings on ergonomics at which she was scheduled to testify. Chao is next scheduled to testify in the Senate on April 18, where she may outline the administration's plans.

Let your lawmakers know workers need protection from ergonomics injuries by visiting the working families e-activist network at www.unionvoice.org/campaign/ergo, where you can send an instant fax. @

College Workers Turn a New Page in Organizing

Counseling room-mates in conflict and reining in Saturday-night partiers who have had too much to drink are all in a day's work for the resident assistants at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Living in the college dormitories with fellow undergraduates, the student workers are on call all night, every night. In exchange, they receive room, board and a small stipend.

But without a grievance procedure in place, the resident assistants had no recourse if they were unfairly fired—which also meant eviction within a week. In March, they formed a union with UAW Local 2322 and made history by becoming the first undergraduate student resident assistants to win a voice at work.



Three cheers: UMass resident assistants are the first undergraduates to get a voice at work.

"We're just the first, but we're not going to be the last," says Dave Synnott, a member of the organizing committee.

The campaign began last spring with the student activists building a strong organizing committee and going on "dorm calls." University officials argued the students were not workers. But the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission ruled otherwise, paving the way for victory.

Graduate employees at UMass have been members of UAW Local 2322 for more than 10 years, providing a model for the undergraduates' campaign. The graduate students were visible and active on campus, says James Shaw, Local 2322 president. "Otherwise, we probably wouldn't have been successful." @

Bush Prescription Drug Plan: An Affront to Seniors

A prescription drug benefit plan proposed by President George W. Bush is "an affront to America's seniors," George Kourpias, president of the Alliance for Retired Americans, said in written testimony to the Senate Finance Committee March 7. The Bush plan would provide benefits to only 30 percent of older Americans who need coverage, spending just \$8 billion of the proposed \$77 billion in funding between now and fiscal year 2006, Kourpias said.

The Alliance also opposes the president's plan to proceed with a prescription discount card program that lets pharmacy benefit managers decide which drugs would be covered for discounts. Benefit managers make more money from selling brand-name drugs than generic drugs. Older Americans, who would pay \$25 for a card, would have no guarantee the medications their doctors prescribe would be eligible for a discount, says Kourpias.

Meanwhile, the Alliance's grass roots are growing, with several states in the final stages of establishing Alliance affiliates. Currently, 18 state groups and 316 chapters are operating under provisional charters. The Alliance's first fully chartered state affiliate is Illinois, which held its founding convention April 2-3. @



Unions for Women

From nursing home workers in South Florida to domestic workers in South Africa, women are joining unions in record numbers. Today, 6.77 million women—an all-time high—are part of the global union movement. To help women gain a voice at work, the AFL-CIO, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions launched the “Unions for Women, Women for Unions” global campaign.

The groups seek to double the number of women in unions worldwide by 2005. The campaign began March 7 to coincide with International Women’s Day and is based largely on results from ICFTU’s global 2001 “Ask a Working Woman” survey. In the survey, which the ICFTU adopted from the successful 2000 AFL-CIO survey, women say they have not joined unions in part because they don’t understand how unions can help them, don’t have the time because of family responsibilities and have a negative image of trade unions.

“Women and people of color especially often have little power on the job and unions are the best vehicle for them to gain a voice,” says CLUW President and AFL-CIO Executive Council member Gloria Johnson.

For more information, visit www.icftu.org and www.aflcio.org. @



LISA BEVIS

Elected

Melissa Gilbert was elected president of the Screen Actors March 8 in a re-run of the union’s November vote. Gilbert, who starred in the TV series “Little House on the Prairie,” was elected to the AFL-CIO Executive Council in December.

Tune into Union Heroes

Most union activists have heard of A. Philip Randolph, but what about Charles Hayes, William Lucy or the Rev. Addie Wyatt? Although these three prominent African American union leaders have been involved in pivotal battles for civil rights and political justice, their names are not well known—but may be soon, now that they are featured in a new commercial that began airing on urban radio stations in late February.

The “Union Hall Heroes” radio spots are sponsored by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, an AFL-CIO constituency group, as part of its new public education campaign. CBTU also is organizing a speakers’ bureau to



JOHNNIE KNOX

Spotlight: AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer and CBTU President William Lucy (left) and the Rev. Addie Wyatt are joined by Wyatt’s husband, the Rev. Claude Wyatt (center).

reach schools, community organizations and media groups with the union message.

Hayes and Wyatt both served as vice presidents of the United Food and Commercial Workers. @

OUT FRONT

A little more than a year ago, Republicans in Congress and President Bush repealed the federal rule protecting workers from crippling ergonomic injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. Since then, an estimated 1.8 million workers suffered these painful injuries on the job.

Over the past year, like every recent year, more than 60,000 workers died from workplace injuries and diseases and another 6 million were hurt on the job.

And about seven months ago, workers at the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, on airlines and in post offices were attacked on the job by terrorists. Firefighters, police and other emergency workers rushed to rescue them. More than 3,000 died, including more than 600 union members.

The working men and women who saved the injured, tended wounds, fought fires, tore through rubble, donated blood and funds and enabled America’s healing were labeled heroes. Politicians scrambled to have photos taken with them and took every opportunity to praise them in front of cameras and microphones.

And nothing changed.

It’s not enough for America to honor our working heroes with lip service. They deserve—and we will fight for—the living memorial of safe and healthy workplaces.

Workers Memorial Day has special meaning this year—and a special mandate. Never before has the refrain “Mourn for the Dead, Fight for the Living” provided better direction for the union movement. This Workers Memorial Day should prompt committed new activism for worker safety and health. It’s time to:

- Demand a strong new federal ergonomics standard.

For more than a year, despite promises, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao did nothing to replace the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s worker protection rule. We will reject feel-good alternatives produced by the corporate community that are designed to delay meaningful action rather than truly protect workers.

- Demand ergonomic protections in state and local laws and at our workplaces. We will bargain for strong workplace ergonomic protections and mobilize workers for state and local laws and regulations, as well as a new federal standard.

- Demand that OSHA and MSHA enforce laws and protections against known workplace hazards and new safety and security threats.

- And, perhaps most important, help more workers form unions—their best opportunity to speak out and bargain for safe jobs, respect and a better future. @

Fight for the Living



VIRGINIA LEE HUNTER

BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

Laborers: Building an Organizing Model

BY LAUREN LAZAROVICI

In the 1950s, asbestos was hailed as a “miracle material.” A strong and fire-resistant mineral, builders packed asbestos in the attics and walls of apartment buildings, schools and offices to insulate against heat and cold. But by the 1970s, scientists began detecting serious health hazards posed by asbestos. If inhaled, the tiny asbestos fibers can cause life-threatening lung problems. Today, when buildings are revamped or demolished, highly skilled workers wearing protective clothing remove the asbestos, taking precautions to protect themselves, their co-workers and the environment.

In New Jersey, where until recently only about 12 percent of asbestos removal workers were union members, employers often pressured workers to cut corners on safety, creating potential health hazards for workers—as well as for everyone in the buildings, including school children and families. In addition to health and safety hazards on the job, workers were treated like replaceable commodities. “If you called in sick, the boss would tell you there were 20 people lined up waiting for your job,” says Juan Mazlymian, a former asbestos worker who is now deputy supervisor of Laborers Local 1030. “If you had to go to the bathroom, they would tell you to open up a paper bag,” he says.

In 1997, LIUNA members in New Jersey began laying the groundwork for what has become a successful industrywide organizing campaign, boosting union market share to 65 percent. In the past year, the number of union workers has risen from 275 to 600, working for more than 40 contractors. By shifting resources to organizing, reaching out to community allies and using its political clout, LIUNA is helping the primarily immigrant workforce win dignity and respect on the job. “We must continue developing a strategy that goes after entire markets if we

LABORERS

are to grow and strengthen our union,” says LIUNA President Terence O’Sullivan. “We will not stop until we represent each and every worker” in the asbestos removal field.

Changing to organize

In 1995, LIUNA leaders first launched an industrywide organizing campaign among asbestos-removal workers in New York City in which they signed up contractors across the entire market rather than one contractor at a time. LIUNA found that an industrywide organizing strategy builds bargaining strength by making it more difficult for nonunion firms to undercut union companies that agree to good job standards. Rallying, picketing and talking with workers door-to-door, activists helped more than 2,000 workers win a voice on the job by spring 1996—and found a successful organizing model.

But to replicate the initiative, LIUNA needed resources and support. With the backing of members, union leaders in 1997 launched an organizing fund drive in the

union’s eastern region (New Jersey, Delaware, the five boroughs of New York City and Long Island) with a voluntary dues check-off, that

enabled leaders to boost the number of organizers from one to 28. The effort now is part of similar campaigns in each of LIUNA’s nine regions across the country, enabling the union to spend \$19 million on organizing in 2000. Of that, about \$10 million came from the international union—representing 26 percent of LIUNA’s budget. “Our members support organizing campaigns that reach out to today’s workers—whether they’re new immigrants, young people new to construction or veteran workers,” says O’Sullivan. “That’s what is making our union stronger and that is what our members want.”

“Our members support organizing campaigns that reach out to today’s workers—whether they’re new immigrants, young people new to construction or veteran construction workers. That’s what is making our union stronger and that is what our members want.”

—LIUNA President Terence O’Sullivan

To build ever-stronger support among union members, LIUNA leaders embarked on a member education and mobilization program called VOICE (Volunteer Organizers In Construction Empowerment) to educate union workers about the connection between a strong union and wages, benefits and job security—and how a union becomes strong through helping new members organize. VOICE also gave leaders the chance to identify members with the commitment to become organizers, helping build a core of organizers who reflect the workers' ethnic and language diversity and on-the-job experience.

"Not only did the rank-and-file organizers speak the same language as employees, they understood the work, shared the same culture, often lived in the same neighborhoods and were able to effectively deliver a message about workers' rights and the hope for better conditions," says Raymond Pocino, a LIUNA vice president and eastern regional manager. LIUNA member-organizers often fine tune the organizing skills they need at the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute's three-day training program and at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md.

Member-organizer Ana Taveras became a construction worker with the help of a Laborers training program in New York City after struggling to make ends meet as a single mother on a salesclerk's salary. Because she is bilingual, local leaders asked her to help out in the union office and talk with workers about the problems they faced on jobs, such as not getting paid. Most of the workers Taveras meets are recent immigrants from Central and South America.

"They borrow thousands of dollars to come to the United States and end up working for \$5.50 an hour. They have a responsibility to pay back the money and they don't want to walk off the job." Breaking through that sense of fear and intimidation is the organizer's challenge, she says. "Once they understand the message that as a worker, they have rights, they get courage and then they join," says Taveras.

Forging community alliances

In June 2001, when city officials in New Brunswick, N.J., embarked on a demolition project of the city's dilapidated public housing, they chose a nonunion contractor. Laborers Local 1030 swung into action, forging an alliance with a key community group and winning the city council's com-



Getting a VOICE: Combining community outreach, political action and strategic allocation of funds to organizing, LIUNA has helped thousands of workers gain a voice at work.

mitment to respect workers' rights in future phases of the demolition.

Because funding for public housing comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, construction contractors are required by federal law to hire and (if possible) train local residents for jobs. The contractor at the New Brunswick Apartments wasn't meeting that requirement. Laborers Local 1030 joined with the tenants' association to hammer out a proposal: The union would train area residents if the housing authority hired a union contractor. Together, the activists rallied at the worksite—with 25-foot inflatable rats representing the nonunion contractor—and collected signatures on petitions and packed city council hearings. Union leaders took city officials, tenants activists and members of the Middlesex County Economic Opportunities Corp. on tours of the union's training facility in nearby Jamesburg.

Ultimately, the housing authority agreed to make its best effort to use union contractors in the future. It also is providing funds for residents to be trained at LIUNA's facility. Beverly Marshall, president of the New Brunswick Apartments Tenants Association, says her group's relationship with LIUNA is valuable—

and lasting. "They know how to do what needs to be done, when to do it—and why."

Reaching out to community organizations has played an important role in helping the union spread the word to the many Serbo-Croatian immigrants who work as asbestos removers. In heavily Serbian neighborhoods of Paterson, N.J., the union established contacts with the local churches and tenant organizations. "Workers were going to their church with workplace problems," says Dave Johnson, director of the Laborers' Eastern Region Organizing Fund. "The church would refer asbestos workers to us."

Taking political action

Like many other unions, LIUNA is combining organizing with politics to magnify their successes. During the 2001 gubernatorial race in New Jersey, LIUNA was among the unions mobilizing thousands of union voters to support James McGreevey (D), who won by a small margin (see *America@work*, February 2002). McGreevey's first executive order supported project labor agreements on state public works construction jobs, providing an important incentive for employers to employ union-represented workers. "We signed a contract because it gives us more opportunities to bid for better jobs," says Ralph Lazarevich, a partner in ABC Construction Corp.

Blending politics, organizing, community outreach and member education, LIUNA members in New Jersey are winning important victories for working families and showing what's possible when unions harness activists' desire for a voice on the job. "There's a lot of talk, talk, talk about organizing," says organizer Taveras. "Unions have to go out and do it." @

How the Laborers are Building a Stronger Union

- Launching an industrywide organizing campaign.
- Educating and mobilizing members in support of the campaign.
- Raising funds, especially for the organizing drive.
- Forging community alliances for union jobs.
- Mobilizing politically to win ongoing support.

"Ruthlessness, callousness and arrogance don't belong here."
—Enron Code of Ethics

Enron *This!*

A giant multinational corporation—hailed as a superb innovator—goes bankrupt.

Thousands of workers lose their jobs, their health care and their life savings. Top corporate executives walk away with millions.

Enron's failure is a tragedy for thousands of workers, but it is not an isolated case. The Enron debacle highlights the all-too-common keys to corporate conduct in the New Economy: unfettered deregulation of entire industries, privatization of vital government services, business operations moved overseas and the frenzied drive to keep share prices rising, even when the business is failing—all at the expense of workers and the public.

In this issue, **America@work** takes a look at how we became an Enron Nation—the failures of corporate governance and regulation, as well as the political behavior that made possible the Enron disaster. The issue also looks at how union activists are fighting back with strategies to protect working families from future Enrons. "The Enron Economy" explores how companies' greed is undermining corporate integrity. "Rotten to Its Corporate Core" showcases Enron as a case study of how companies should *not* be run, while "No Way to Retire" highlights the need for real retirement security in light of corporate instability. "Deep Pockets and Old Boy Ties" investigates the many links between Enron's political contributions and the policies that paid off big for the company.

The Enron Economy

BY JANE BIRNBAUM

Once each year, Enron Corp. stages a charity basketball tournament in front of the company's 50-story Houston skyscraper. The winning team of workers plays Enron's top executives, including former Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Skilling. But the executive team is enhanced by a special player—a Houston Rockets pro-basketball star.

Using a ringer was typical for Enron executives long before the company became the nation's largest corporate bankruptcy after revelations of inflated profits and hidden debts. In business as in play, management substituted the virtual for the actual and rigged the game. Over the years, as Enron executives turned a traditional energy company that owned power plants and pipelines into an operation that traded energy contracts, the company lobbied legislators to deregulate the energy industry. Trading financial instruments enabled Enron executives to create a paper empire.

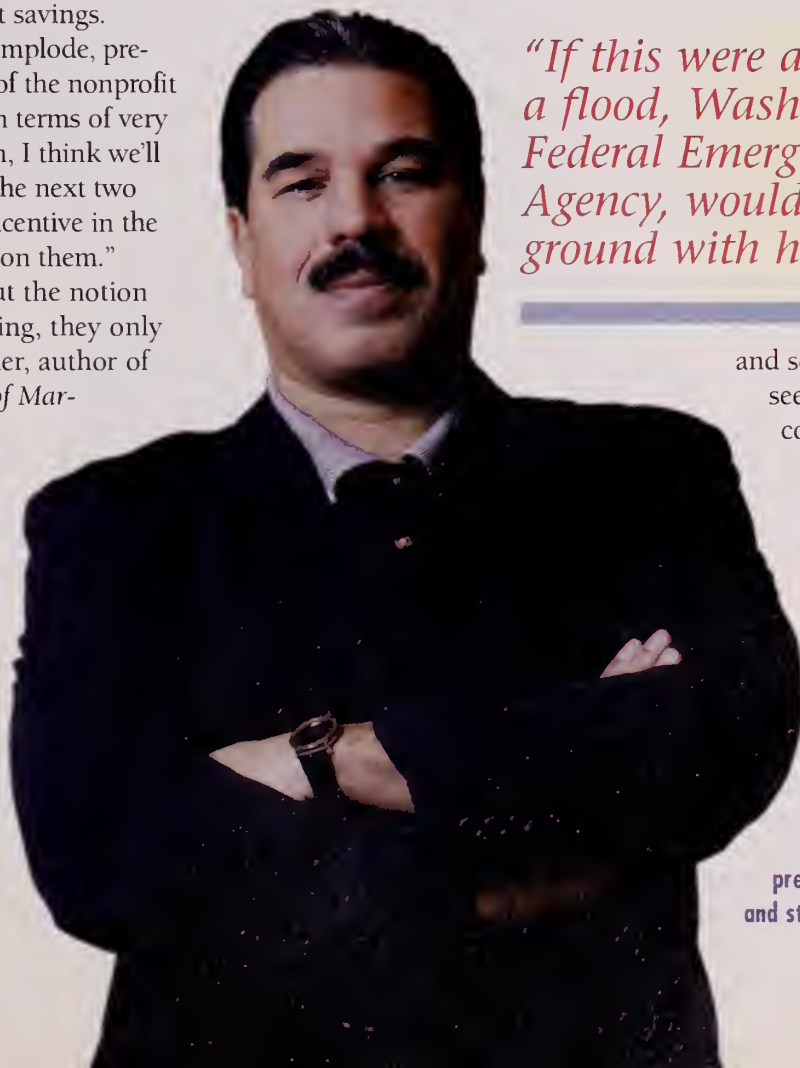
Before its December bankruptcy declaration, Enron was named "the most innovative" company for six consecutive years in *Fortune* magazine's "most admired companies" list. "It's one thing to be innovative but another to hide debt, which is what Enron's top executives did to push up the stock price," says Digna Showers, an Enron administrative assistant for 18 years who lost \$435,000 in retirement savings.

More Fortune 500 companies are ready to implode, predicts Dean Baker, economist and co-director of the nonprofit Center for Economic and Policy Research. "In terms of very large companies that are fundamentally rotten, I think we'll see between five to 10 more exposed within the next two years," he says. "Top executives have every incentive in the world to misbehave, and there are no checks on them."

"The New Economy was supposedly about the notion that smart people don't have to make anything, they only have to rearrange assets," says Robert Kuttner, author of *Everything For Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets* and editor of *American Prospect* magazine. "The financial part of the economy is always trying to rip off the real part, to extract profits from the hides of working people who produce things."

New Economy corporations mounted a takeover of political institutions during what's now being called the "Enron Economy" for its smoke-and-mirrors corporate manipulation. Enron contributed nearly \$6 million to political parties and candidates—including President George W. Bush—between 1989 and 2001 (see "Deep Pockets and Old Boy Ties," page 18).

MICHELLE FRANKFURTER



"If this were a hurricane or a flood, Washington, with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, would have been on the ground with help the next day."

and society into ventures that seemed to serve only the company's top executives.

"Today, most CEOs have only financial backgrounds," says economist Charles McMillion, president of MBG Information Services, a business consulting firm. "They don't want to make anything, they want to be middlemen, traders, like Enron."

Dennis Vegas, former Enron vice president for brand management and strategic marketing

Knee-jerk reaction to cut costs

In the early 1990s, Enron pushed for the removal of state government energy oversight so utility companies no longer would have a monopoly on producing and distributing—instead, Enron would transfer power from producers to consumers. The company then developed and dominated the trading of contracts between energy buyers and sellers.

“This was all proposed in the name of consumer choice and lower prices,” recalls Jim Dushaw, the Electrical Workers’ utility department director. “But that never happened because the power producers and Enron took advantage of their positions. California legislators are claiming that Enron manipulated the market to push prices up.”

While investors flocked to information technology-based New Economy companies like Enron, so-called Old Economy companies strove to stay attractive on Wall Street by contracting-out, which increased profits while weakening unions. “General Motors executives, for example, spun off GM’s Delphi parts division with its auto workers employees,” says Baker. “They figured they’d get their parts for the lowest cost they could find. In general, if CEOs said they respected workers, odds were they were out of a job in the Enron Economy.”

Once deregulated, utility companies that had lost their assured income streams slashed workforces to ensure profitability. “Skilling said that a successful energy company had to depopulate, that people gum up the works,” Dushaw remembers. The energy industry shed approximately 127,500 electrical operation positions—employees in jobs that required climbing poles and working underground—between 1992

and 1998, according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Most belonged to the IBEW and Utility Workers unions.

The bottom-line mentality spread to government during the Enron Economy.

In fact, Enron executives led the traders’ 1990s war cry: “Government and regulation bad, free markets good.”

“The success of federal agencies, for example, began to be measured by the number of jobs they outsourced, with the rationale that the private sector was inherently more efficient,” says Baker. “But in fact, it just paid workers less and destroyed union jobs.”

What’s more, like Enron, government contractors found a way to game the system. In the Department of Defense, for example, “thousands of jobs in weapons systems maintenance and sensitive internal communications have been contracted-out,” says Jacque Simon, AFGE’s public policy director. “This puts the department at the mercy of contractors who, after low-balling bids, jack up the price, knowing that the government, which has gotten rid of its highly

trained workers, has no choice but to pay.”

A welcome result of Enron’s downfall could be a change in the Enron Economy’s negative perception of government and its value. Says Kuttner: “Enron demonstrates that the market economy doesn’t regulate itself, that you need government regulation to protect workers, investors and pension beneficiaries as well as the larger economy from the spillover effect when you have a corporate meltdown.”

Moving overseas to outrun the regulators

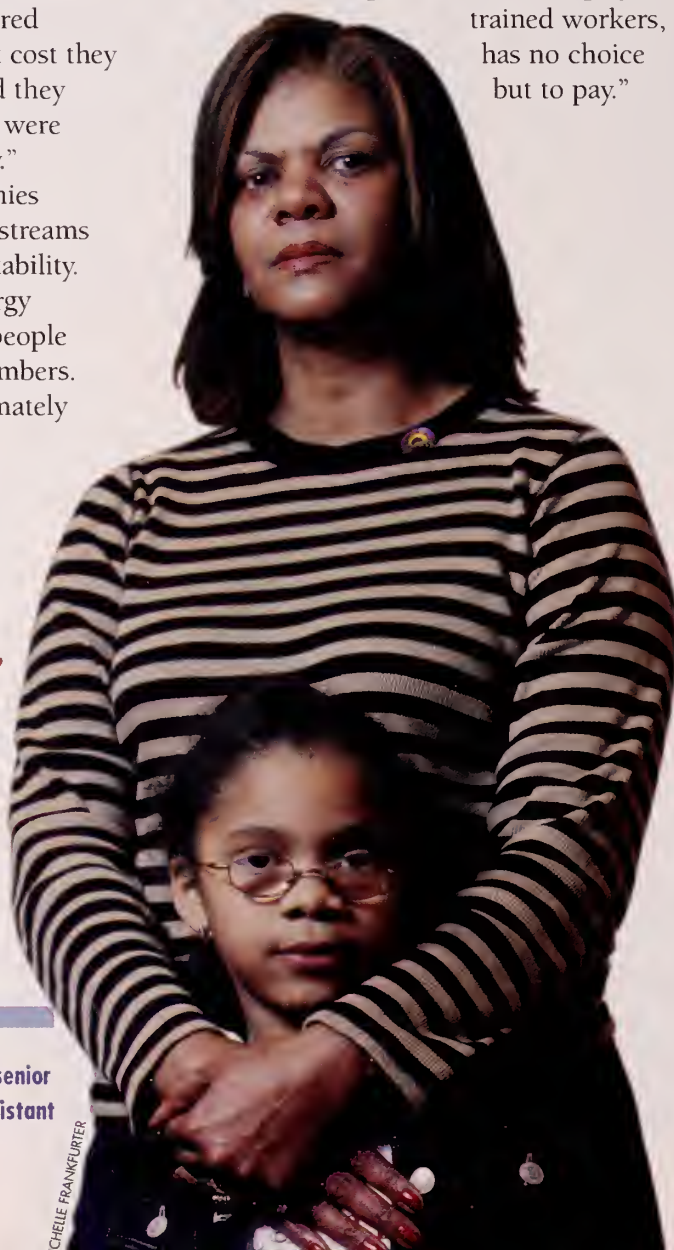
Global expansion was another key component of the Enron Economy’s drive for profit. Enron executives legally set up thousands of subsidiaries or developed partnerships with established companies in offshore tax and regulatory havens such as the Cayman Islands. These overseas, often phantom spin-offs enabled the corporation to hide debt, according to a special report issued in February by a special committee of Enron board members charged with investigating off-the-balance-sheet partnerships. With its debt hidden from Bermuda to the Channel Islands, the company filed “inaccurate financial statements from 1997 to 2001,” and provided “unauthorized and unjustifiable financial windfalls” to key executives, the report says.

Old Economy companies also looked overseas, where they could avoid strong unions and environmental laws. International Paper, for instance, has been buying up and shuttering U.S. paper operations while investing in ventures in New Zealand—where managers have busted unions, according to Dick Blin, PACE International Union director of research and education. International Paper, which now is investing in a Hong Kong holding company with massive paper operations in China, cut some 5,000 PACE workers in 2001, Blin estimates. “IP was international, but now it’s become a financial operation, which means shutting down U.S. plants to reduce competition and the inevitable layoffs that harm communities.”

Ultimately, the Enron Economy calls into question the financial operators running the nation, says University of Texas public affairs professor and economist James Galbraith. “Combined with their tight relations with people in the political process and lack of regulatory oversight, we can see that their incentives for fraudulent inflation of stock prices are enormous—and that the situation is unsustainable.” @

“The only income I’m getting right now is unemployment insurance. I have grandchildren to feed and utility bills to pay. I don’t know how I can do it.”

Debra Johnson, former Enron senior administrative assistant



Rotten to Its Corporate Core'

BY JANE BIRNBAUM



Matthew Wackerle (right), 18, son of laid-off Enron worker Donna Wackerle

Enron Corp. insiders—top executives such as Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Lay and three board members—sold 17.3 million company shares for \$1.1 billion in 2001 while issuing bogus financial statements, according to dozens of shareholder lawsuits. And with the corporate behemoth just days away from collapse, securities analysts at Wall Street investment firms that did business with Enron continued to recommend its stock.

Long aware that a disaster like Enron was brewing and to protect the retirement savings of working families, activists with unions and union pension funds have filed approximately 600 corporate governance shareholder proposals since 1999, according to Proxy Voter Services, a consultant

to worker retirement funds. Responsible corporate governance counters managerial shenanigans with rules and regulations that break up cozy insider relationships, according to Ron Richardson, Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees executive vice president and the secretary of the Council of Institutional Investors, a nonprofit organization representing large pension funds.

When Enron's stock price collapsed last fall after revelations of financial irregularities, hundreds of thousands of investors and pension fund participants nationwide lost approximately \$70 billion, Enron's total share value before its dive. Pension funds, including union plans, are estimated to have lost more than \$10 billion.

While congressional and federal investigators have made household names of former Enron executives, including Lay and former CEO Jeffrey Skilling, former Enron employees and their families and the nation's taxpayers are paying the price for the lack of effective regulation and governance at Enron.

Matthew Wackerle, son of Donna Wackerle, an Enron senior administrative assistant, lost his health insurance when his mother was laid off. The 18-year-old college student has diabetes that requires regular medical attention. Says Wackerle: "I'm struggling to pay for medical necessities because Enron was rotten to its corporate core."

"I'm struggling to pay for medical necessities because Enron was rotten to its corporate core."

And in late February, when the executive director of the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., which protects pension participants, testified before a Senate Finance Committee hearing, it appeared that taxpayers might have to foot the bill for hundreds of millions of dollars if Enron seriously underfunded its workers' pension plan.

Board members defined by conflicts of interests

All too often, corporate directors—whose retainers, stock grants and other perks for essentially part-time work easily exceed \$100,000 a year at major companies, according to *USA Today*—are executives' lapdogs, says Council of Institutional Investors Executive Director Sarah Teslik.

The Enron board twice voted to waive the company's code of ethics to allow former Enron Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow to become general partner in off-the-books ventures.

"These are red flags," says Charles Elson, a professor at the Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Delaware.

At Enron, and at corporations in general, a board's nominating committee suggests new board members, sometimes based on the executives' suggestions. But shareholders themselves should nominate members, says Teslik. Failing that, they can withhold votes—a majority of votes withheld would kill a nomination—or even run their own slate of candidates, she adds.

Or director independence can be regulated: In December, the AFL-CIO submitted a rule-making petition to the SEC, prompted by the Enron debacle, asking it to require corporate directors to disclose all hidden ties to management.

Another strategy for unions seeking independent directors is to urge corporations to agree that their boards' nominating committees will comprise only independent directors who in turn will nominate only independent directors. For this year's proxy season, the Operating Engineers central pension fund filed such shareholder proposals last fall at six companies, including Apple Computers Inc., Duke Energy and Calpine Corp. The first vote, at Apple, is scheduled for April 19.

Not-so-independent auditors

Corporations hire accounting firms to audit their financial reports, upon which individuals and corporations base their investment decisions. The accounting firms also can conduct nonaudit work, which gives them the incentive "to not only overstate the good stuff and hide the bad and obscure the whole package, but do it within SEC rules and financially acceptable accounting standards," says Greg Kinczewski, a vice president of the Marco Consulting Group, an adviser to multi-employer union benefit plans.

In hiring Big Five accounting firm Arthur Andersen to audit its books and provide financial advice, Enron clearly walked the line on conflicts of interest. But it was hardly alone. According to *Business Week*, in the past six years, investors have lost nearly \$200 billion after audit failures. And the pace seems to be accelerating. Between 1997 and 2000, the number of audits that had to be redone, as happened at Enron, has doubled.

It was on Andersen's watch that Enron paid almost no income taxes in four of the past five years—by creating hundreds of foreign partnerships to conceal debt, a strategy

Unions Reach Out

As longtime advocates of good corporate governance, the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions have responded to the Enron meltdown every step of the way. In late February, the AFL-CIO Executive Council called on Congress, the president and federal regulators to enact and enforce specific governance and retirement security reforms. (For the council's full statement, click on www.aflcio.org/publ/estatemnts/feb2002/governance.htm.)

In late October, the AFL-CIO filed shareholder resolutions at several investment firms with the aim of breaking up analysts' conflict of interests—because even while Enron's share price was plummeting, many Wall Street security analysts employed by publicly traded firms that did business with Enron continued to recommend the stock.

The firms have responded: In February, the federation withdrew its proposal at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. when the company created policies under which analysts' compensation and work would be controlled directly by the firm's management committee and the analysts would not own stock they reviewed for investment purchases. The AFL-CIO has endorsed the Com-

that "was determined with extensive participation and structuring advice from Andersen," according to the Enron board's special investigative committee report issued Feb. 1.

(Although it paid almost no taxes, Enron reaped more than \$166 million through federal contracts from 1996 to 2000, according to federal procurement data. Most were with the armed forces, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the General Services Administration, the Department of Energy and other agencies for electrical and other utility services or electrical equipment. In January, the Bush administration, after repealing in December a Clinton administration rule authorizing the government to deny contracts to corporate lawbreakers, said it would order federal agencies to review their contracts with Enron and Andersen.)

Even before Enron imploded, a coalition of building and construction trades unions, including the Electrical Workers, Plumbers and Pipe Fitters and Sheet Metal Workers, pressed the auditor conflict-of-interest issue. They have filed more than 30 shareholder resolutions proposing companies adopt policies requiring auditors to perform only audit-related services. The unions also are bringing separate proposals calling for corporate boards to appoint independent and watchful audit committees.

Enron Is Not Alone

Enron's failure is not an isolated incident. The last decade is rife with shareholder lawsuits against corporate executives at companies including Waste Management Inc., Sunbeam Products Inc. and Cendant Corp.

More recently, shareholders have sued executives of Global Crossing Ltd.—a telecommunications company that lost nearly \$50 billion in capital when it became the nation's fourth-largest-company to declare bankruptcy Jan. 28. But while shareholders allege that Global Crossing executives inflated profits for their own financial purposes, the company's fortunes initially fell because they were tied to those of the high-tech industry.

Like Enron's, Global Crossing's bankruptcy has cost workers their retirement savings. Between 1999 and mid-2001, Global Crossing employed nearly 1,500 Communications Workers of America members and put company stock in the workers' 401(k) retirement plans, which collectively lost millions as the stock price tumbled, according to CWA economist Robert Patrician.

But the company's insiders profited handsomely. Between 1999 and this year's bankruptcy, executives and directors sold stock worth \$1.3 billion, according to Thompson Financial, a business information company, with CEO and co-founder Gary Winnick accounting for about \$735 million.

Enron Workers

prehensive Investor Protection Act introduced by Rep. John LaFalce (D-N.Y.) that would require all Wall Street securities firms to adopt similar policies.

When Enron dismissed thousands of employees and paid them no severance or less than they were entitled to under company policy, the AFL-CIO stepped in to help. In mid-February, after the AFL-CIO, the Harris County (Texas) Central Labor Council and the Rev. Jesse Jackson met with new Enron CEO Steve Cooper, Enron agreed to pay \$4,500 to nearly 200 workers who had received no severance. And on Feb. 27, the AFL-CIO joined laid-off workers in asking the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of New York to release severance money to thousands more Enron workers who had not received full payment. Despite the opposition of big banks on the Enron creditors' committee, including Wells Fargo and J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., the judge blessed a \$5 million fund to meet emergency needs of laid-off workers and asked that Enron, the banks and Enron workers negotiate an amount of severance that could be paid immediately.

Citing the financial ruin Enron caused its 21,000 employees, the AFL-CIO in late January called on 21 publicly traded companies to refuse to renominate Enron directors to their

The first of the building trades' auditor independence proposals in the 2002 shareholder proxy season triumphed in February when the UA S&P 500 Index Fund, an activist mutual fund with workers, worker pension funds and employers as investors, sponsored a measure at the Walt Disney Co. that received a 44 percent "yes" vote. "The 44 percent vote is very significant for a first-time resolution," says Council of Institutional Investors Research Director Ann Yerger. "Generally it takes time for shareholders to understand resolutions and shape voting decisions—this vote indicated that the issue of auditor independence resonates with many investors." Yet even before the vote was announced, Disney executives told shareholders they would consider the vote unanimous and would ensure their auditor performed only audit-related tasks in the future.

"Shareholder proposals get us heard in boardrooms," says UA Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Patchell.

Excessive executive pay

The Enron debacle has refocused attention on overly generous stock options as an incentive for executive misdeeds. Former Enron CEO Lay's salary topped \$53 million in 2000—but he raked in another \$123 million by exercising stock options, while holding yet more unexercised options worth



"It's way past time for Americans to take whatever actions are necessary to make the needs of workers and their jobs central priorities for our economy."

—AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer
Richard Trumka

\$361 million. That's not uncommon today, according to corporate governance experts. "Compensation is out of hand because boards and CEOs have gotten too cozy," says Nell Minow, editor of the Corporate Library (www.thecorporatelibrary.com), a for-profit corporate watchdog website.

While worker pay is charged to corporate books as a cost, executive options are not—hiding the real cost of runaway CEO pay from investors and the public.

Executive compensation should be tied to company performance, says Minow. "They're supposed to get big bucks when they deliver, not when they don't."

Last year, the Teamsters General Fund sponsored a proposal at McKesson Corp. to give shareholders control of executive sever-



Seeking justice: The Rev. Jesse Jackson and union members join former Enron employees in Houston as part of ongoing efforts to seek severance pay for laid-off workers.

corporate boards. Several directors have resigned from other boards, including Wendy Gramm, wife of Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX), while Enron director Ronnie Chan decided not to seek renomination to

Motorola Inc.'s board. And this month, the AFL-CIO is launching a "No More Business As Usual" series of town hall meetings for unionists and community partners to discuss worker issues, including retirement security and how to make workers a greater priority on the job and in the economy. Says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, "It's way past time for Americans to take whatever actions are necessary to make the needs of workers and their jobs central priorities for our economy."

ance pay. In 1999, McKesson lost \$9 billion in shareholder value in a single day after an accounting scandal. The next year, the CEO left with nearly \$3 million, plus guarantees for millions more. "The fact a CEO failed in such a way that was detrimental to shareholders and workers, and was not only seemingly unaffected but rewarded, is outrageous," says IBT General Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel. The proposal got a strong 24 percent "yes" vote.

Early this year, the AFL-CIO sponsored a shareholder proposal indexing senior executive stock option awards to performance at the Cendant Corp., a holding company with properties, including the Avis rental car operation. The proposal did not even need to come to a vote—after negotiations, the Cendant board passed a policy requiring all future option plans to be put up for shareholder approval. @

Visit www.aflcio.org and Take Action

Visit www.aflcio.org and learn more about what happened at Enron, hear workers' stories and send a fax to Enron and its corporate creditors like Citigroup and Wells Fargo telling them to support full severance packages for laid-off Enron workers.

No Way to Retire

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

A huge, well-respected company goes bankrupt. Thousands of employees lose their jobs—as well as the pension funds they thought would carry them through retirement. Despite opposition from the business community, union activists mobilize to ensure that corporate greed never again leads to this kind of debacle.

Enron, right?

Actually, it was Studebaker Corp. in 1963, when the South Bend, Ind., automobile manufacturer went out of business—abandoning 4,000 workers, many UAW members, to a bleak future. Workers nearing age 60 who had labored for the company for 40 years were left with nothing.

Unions, notably the Steelworkers and UAW, mobilized on Capitol Hill to fight for ERISA, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. “There was intense lobbying on the other side,” remembers Claude Poulin, who was a 30-year-old actuary working for UAW when members of Congress debated the landmark legislation in the early 1970s. “Management groups said Studebaker was an isolated incident,” says Poulin, in an eerie echo of today’s corporate rhetoric.

Today, federal law requires all pension funds to meet minimum funding standards, be insured by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. and include a maximum of 10 percent of company stock. The system unions championed worked—until corporations found a way around it. In the 1980s, employers began moving workers out of defined-benefit pension plans and into defined-contribution plans, such as 401(k)s, which are riskier and virtually unregulated.

Union members know safeguarding retirement security involves more than addressing the corruption behind a single, high-profile corporate scandal. As in 1963, union activists again are on the front lines for retirement security, campaigning to protect Social Security from privatization and increase corporate accountability. In February, the AFL-CIO Executive Council approved a comprehensive campaign to improve working families’ retirement security and reform corporate regulation and governance. Unions also are bargaining to win and improve defined-benefit pension plans, which provide workers specific monthly benefits throughout their retirement and improve the rules governing 401(k)s, known as defined-contribution plans.

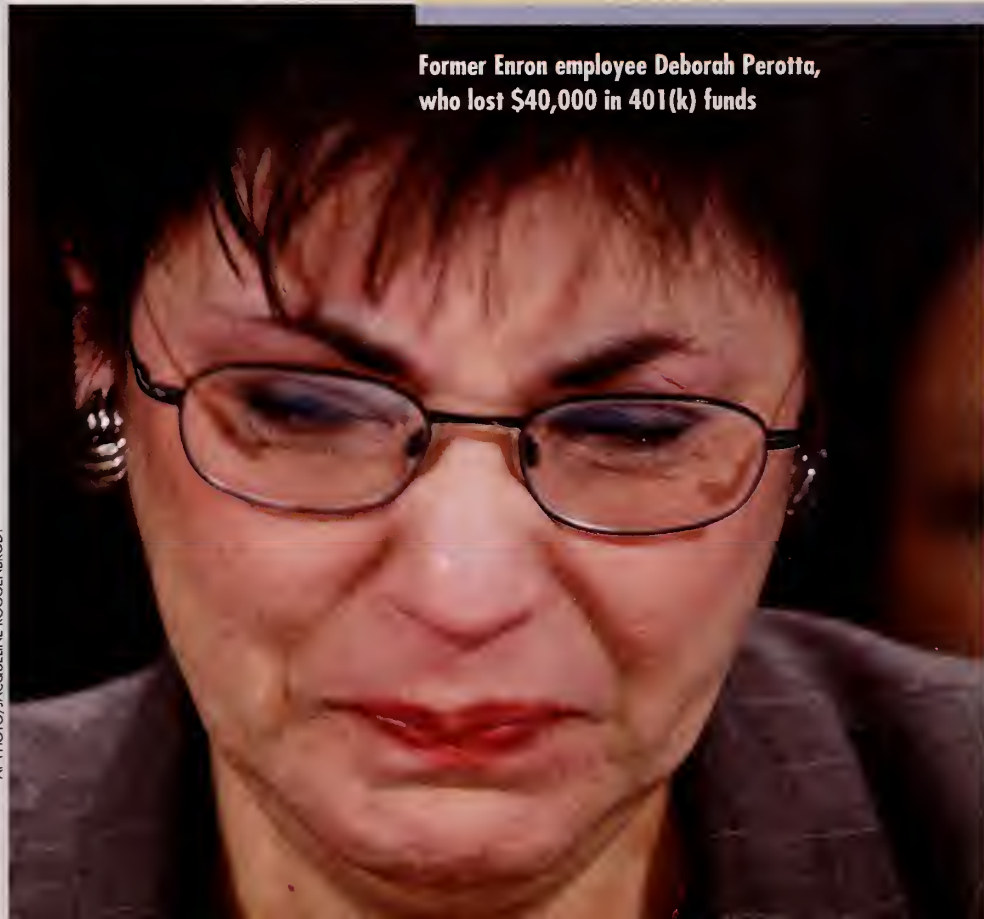
401(k)s should supplement—not anchor—retirement security

Workers with defined-benefit plans (also called pensions) receive a specific amount of money when they retire, based on salary history and years of service. The employer bears the investment risk. Contributions may be made by the employee, the employer or both. The federal government insures the benefits in private company plans. Workers with defined-contribution plans—such as 401(k)s—defer some of their salary into the plan and bear the entire investment risk. Sometimes the employer matches a portion of workers’ contributions.

Employers increasingly are shifting from defined-benefit to defined-contribution plans. According to Bernstein Investment Research and Management, a firm that provides research on investments to

“Given my experience at Enron, I have come to appreciate Social Security.”

Former Enron employee Deborah Perotta, who lost \$40,000 in 401(k) funds



AP PHOTO/JACQUELINE ROGENBRODT



MAI LINDA BRENT/BEW

"All of us regarded the 401(k) plan as a way of investing our hard-earned wages for future security. It all now appears to have been a cruel illusion."

institutional investors such as pensions and mutual funds, some 27 million workers were covered by defined-benefit plans and 11 million participants were in defined-contribution plans in 1975. By 2000, the ratio reversed dramatically: 55 million were in defined-contribution plans and only 22 million had the security of defined-benefit plans. Union members—who have a voice on the job and the clout to negotiate retirement security—are much more likely to have pensions they can count on. While only 16 percent of nonunion workers have defined-benefit retirement coverage, 70 percent of union members do, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Enron matched workers' own 401(k) contributions with company stock (not cash) and restricted when and how much stock workers could sell—as a result, 62 percent of employee 401(k) funds were invested in Enron stock when Enron collapsed in December. In contrast to defined-benefit contribution plans, federal law does not limit the amount of company stock that can be invested in 401(k) plans.

Enron workers were not unique in having a significant proportion of their 401(k) money in company stock: Procter & Gamble Co., The Sherwin-Williams Co. and Abbott Laboratories have packed most of their employees' 401(k)s with company stock. Nationwide, some 19 percent of all 401(k) assets are invested in the employer's stock, according to the nonprofit Employee Benefit Research Institute.

President George W. Bush has proposed new 401(k) regulations, but union leaders say they don't go far enough. "The proposal puts employees in a more vulnerable situation than they are today and pulls employee investment security to a dangerous new low," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Union leaders want to reform 401(k)s by requiring employers who don't provide defined-benefit plans to make 401(k) contributions in cash if they also provide their own stock as an investment option for employees' contributions. They want work-

Robert Vigil, electrician at Enron subsidiary Portland General Electric, member of Electrical Workers Local 125

ers to have expansive rights to sell company stock in their 401(k) plans and an equal voice in the management of the accounts. Congress also should restrict what employers can do to stuff plans with company stock—particularly when a company provides only a 401(k) and no real pension.

Enron also demonstrates how critical it is for union leaders to negotiate strong pension plans. When meat-packing workers at Farmland National Beef in Liberal, Kan., and at Seaboard Farms Inc. in Guymon, Okla., organized for a voice at work with United Food and Commercial Workers a few years ago, they bargained to join the union's multiemployer pension plan. "It's an absolute necessity" for union activists to win pension plans, says Tom Price, president of UFCW Local 2. Meat cutter Russel Nelson agrees. "Our pension through the union is completely secure," says the 37-year-old father of four. "When we are ready to retire, it is there for us."

In fact, hundreds of Sheet Metal Workers at two Enron construction subsidiaries, Williard Inc. and Limbach Constructors, have a union-negotiated pension plan and 401(k) plan separate from the failed Enron accounts. They

were unaffected by the collapse of Enron's 401(k) plan. "These workers prove that good collective bargaining agreements insulate working families from corporate manipulation that can harm their retirement security," says SMWIA President Michael Sullivan.

Strengthening Social Security

While fighting for more and better pensions and workers' savings plans such as safer 401(k)s, union activists have been mobilizing to strengthen the foundation of retirement security: Social Security. The nation's dependable family insurance program has never missed sending a benefit check, is guaranteed for life and rises with inflation. It is the only retirement income on which virtually all workers can rely as a minimal foundation. But Bush and his corporate allies are seeking to privatize Social Security, exposing it to the ups and downs of the stock market.

After meeting behind closed doors for several months, Bush's hand-picked Commission to Strengthen Social Security—made up only of pro-privatization members—issued a report in December with three recommendations to turn over part of Social Security to Wall Street. The plans would either raise the retirement age, cut benefits or both.

"I have heard and read about efforts to privatize Social Security. I confess, I hadn't given it much thought," says Deborah Perotta, a former administrative assistant at Enron, who lost \$40,000 of her retirement plan. "Given my experience at Enron, I have come to appreciate Social Security—guaranteed by the federal government—even more. If I were to retire today, that is all the money I would have to live on." @

Florida State Workers Lose Millions

The Enron failure has cost the Florida state employees' pension fund \$355 million in shareholder value since the company's collapse. Teachers, secretaries, mechanics and others—650,000 state workers and another 150,000 retirees—saw their pension fund lose more than twice as much as any other state pension fund because of Florida's heavy investment in Enron.

As one of the overseers of the state pension fund, Gov. Jeb Bush (R)—who received nearly \$20,000 in campaign donations from Enron and its subsidiaries and accounting and law firms for his 1998 gubernatorial campaign, according to Florida Department of State records—allowed Alliance Capital, an investment firm with direct ties to Enron, to manage billions of dollars for the Florida pension fund. Alliance Capital channeled millions of dollars of Florida workers' pension money into Enron—and continued to do so even after Enron was collapsing, according to a *New York Times* investigation. In fact, as of Sept. 30, Alliance Capital was Enron's biggest shareholder. Frank Savage, a member of Alliance's Board of Directors and chairman of Alliance Capital Management International, is a member of Enron's Board of Directors.

Union activists in Florida are leafleting worksites informing members of the Bush connection and urging workers to call the governor to register their disapproval.

Enron
This!

Deep Pockets *and Old Boy Ties*

BY MIKE HALL

Corporate contributions and top-level Washington, D.C., connections paid off big for Enron

More than a decade ago, Enron Corp. began pressuring state and federal governments to deregulate the electrical power industry, chop corporate taxes to record lows and weaken environmental laws, according to federal and state election records and federal lobbying reports.

Enron's efforts paid off. Both Congress and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which regulates and monitors the commodities and futures markets, rolled back trading rules that benefited one of Enron's biggest new ventures—trading energy futures. In recent years, new state and federal laws have made energy deregulation the rule, not the exception. In 2001, the chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and a commissioner of the five-member FERC were appointed by President George W. Bush based on the advice of former Enron Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Lay—a recommendation the Bush administration and Lay acknowledge. Before those appointments were made, according to *The New York Times*, Lay told then-FERC Chairman Curtis Herbert Jr., that he would continue to support him in the job if he would change his views on electricity deregulation. Herbert refused and was replaced.

Enron paid no taxes in four of five years from 1996 to 2000, according to an analysis of the company's records by Citizens for Tax Justice. Despite showing profits that totaled

\$1.88 billion, Enron actually received \$381 million in tax rebates. Yet Enron has lobbied Congress hard for still more tax relief. Enron stood to win a \$254 million tax break if the House-passed and Bush-supported repeal of the corporate minimum alternative tax had won approval last year.

Deregulation of the nation's energy industry, massive tax breaks and passage of other corporate giveaways don't come cheap. Between 1989 and 2001, Enron doled out at least \$15 million to help pave its road to political influence—\$5.8 million in federal campaign contributions to candidates and political parties and another \$9.2 million in federal lobbying expenses, according to figures from the Federal Election Commission and the Center for Responsive Politics. Of the \$5.8 million in campaign cash, 74 percent went directly into Republican candidates' pockets and party coffers. In the current 2002 election cycle, 94 percent of Enron's contributions have ended up in Republican wallets.

In the first six months after Bush took office, Enron spent almost \$2.7 million in Washington lobbying—and initially reported it had spent just \$825,000. Enron failed to report the \$1.85 million the company paid to outside lobbying firms until the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities revealed the discrepancy. Federal law requires reporting out-of-house lobbying expenses.

Enron's largesse was not limited to presi-

dential races and party contributions. The \$5.8 million that Enron spent over the decade included some \$1.13 million it lavished on members of Congress, many of whom are playing big roles in shaping the Enron investigation. Two-thirds of that money went to Republicans.

Through a combination of massive contributions and connections to high-level Washington, D.C., decision makers, including some of the 14 top Bush administration officials—who owned and sold millions of dollars of Enron stock—and former Enron employees and consultants, Enron was among the key corporations shaping policy for an industry—and a nation.

Here's a look at the some of those connections, based on information from the FEC, federal disclosure reports required by law, the Center for Responsive Politics, the Center for Public Integrity and news media reports.

"The workers have been hurt and devastated by this event. We need legislation and we need jobs."

Katherine Ann Benedict,
former Enron marketing specialist

President George W. Bush

Houston-based Enron has been one of George W. Bush's biggest corporate backers since he entered politics in 1994 to run for governor of Texas. The company and its employees gave \$312,500 to Bush's two successful campaigns for the top Texas post. In the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush received another \$113,800 from Enron and its chief executives. FEC records also show that Enron provided Bush use of one of its corporate jets for several campaign swings. Enron also contributed \$10,500 to the Bush-Cheney Recount Fund, set up after the Florida voting scandal, and another \$300,000 to the Bush-Cheney Inaugural Fund.

Bush's first reported connection with Enron dates to 1986, when the oil company he owned entered into a joint drilling venture with Enron. At the time, according to news reports, Lay was close to Bush's father, at the time vice president, but it is not clear if Lay was aware of the younger Bush's involvement in the drilling deal.

Bush and Lay first worked together on the 1992 Republican National Convention and Lay and his wife personally gave Bush \$47,500 for his 1994 campaign. In 2000, Lay also served as one of Bush's "Pioneers"—individuals who raised at least

\$100,000 for the presidential campaign.

Bush, who coined the nickname, "Kenny Boy," appointed Lay to his Energy Department transition team.

While the Bush administration has sought to downplay the president's relationship with Lay, the recent release of more than two dozen letters between Lay and then-Texas Gov. Bush reveal a close relationship that extended deep into Texas politics. In 1997, after Enron's bid to deregulate the state's electricity market barely failed, Lay wrote to Bush, "We would have liked to accomplish more, but realistically, the issue would not have moved nearly as far without your involvement and for that Enron is grateful." Two years later, deregulation was approved.

like Halliburton Co., a Dallas-based energy services firm that Cheney headed for five years—long have had a financial stake.

When the task force released its report, it contained at least 17 policies Enron had advocated or that would benefit the firm financially, according to a report by the minority staff of the House Committee on Government Reform.

The report also included seven of eight recommendations from a memo Lay gave to Cheney in an April 17, 2001, meeting.

Enron's multimillion-dollar down payments on political influence set up the company as the poster child for the corporate dollars that flood electoral politics in hopes of winning political and policy profits.

And when Enron was teetering on collapse, the White House looked aside. In January, the Bush administration admitted that shortly before Enron filed for bankruptcy, Lay contacted Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans to warn them of the company's rapidly worsening financial situation.

"It's now clear that the White House had knowledge that Enron was likely to collapse but did nothing to protect innocent employees and shareholders who ultimately lost their life savings," says Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.).

Vice President Richard Cheney

After contributing nearly half a million dollars to the Bush-Cheney campaign, as well as to recount and inaugural funds in 2000, Enron officials met with Vice President Richard Cheney or his energy policy task force at least six times last year as Cheney was developing the Bush administration's energy plan, including ways to address California's energy crisis that was causing rolling blackouts across the state and skyrocketing utility bills for consumers. The Bush administration's energy blueprint includes deregulation and exploration standards, policies on energy trading and more issues in which Enron and other large energy firms—

The memo, obtained by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and made public Jan. 30, contains recommendations in areas including access to and regulation of interstate electricity transmission lines; a move toward industry, not government, oversight of the nation's electrical transmission system; and caps on wholesale prices for electrical power.

Enron, which was a major out-of-state wholesaler for California's deregulated electricity industry, was benefiting from the huge increases in the wholesale price it was charging during the state's energy crisis. California officials lobbied the Bush administration to impose a cap on wholesale prices.

"We think that's a mistake," Cheney said. Enron, the memo outlined, believed caps were a mistake, too. Eventually, the federal government did impose a price cap.

"It is unlikely that any other corporation in America stood to gain as much from the White House energy plan as Enron," the minority staff report says.

Cheney has refused a request by the U.S. General Accounting Office to turn over records of the energy task force meetings—and for the first time since its founding in 1921, the independent government oversight agency has been forced to go to court to gain access to public records.



Attorney General John Ashcroft

When the Bush administration announced it was launching a Justice Department investigation to uncover potential criminal wrongdoing by Enron, Attorney General John Ashcroft was forced to remove himself. In 2000, he received \$57,499 from Enron—including \$25,000 from Lay—for his failed race to retain his U.S. Senate seat in Missouri. Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson now is heading the investigation. Before coming to the Justice Department, Thompson was a partner in a law firm that represented Enron.

In addition, the entire U.S. Attorney's office in Houston was pulled off the case because of its intimate ties with Enron—although it already had conducted the initial investigative work into Enron.

According to the *Houston Chronicle*, many of the Justice Department staff are related to current and former Enron employees and have close personal and social ties to Enron.

Secretary of the Army Thomas White

As a former vice chairman of Enron Energy Services (EES) for 11 years, Army Secretary Thomas White was paid as much as \$5.5 million annually. Last year, between June 13 and Oct. 30, White sold 405,710 shares of Enron stock for \$12.1 million. Some of those transactions occurred during Enron's "blackout period"—during which employees were prohibited from selling their shares in the company's stock—that ran from Oct. 26 through Nov. 20, according to an Oct. 25 memo from Enron to its

Taking Action

Working families and their unions can help counter corporate influence by demanding public financing of House and Senate campaigns to close the door on huge corporate donations. Recently passed campaign finance reform legislation takes a step forward by banning soft money. But it takes several steps backward by tripling the amount wealthy donors can give to candidates and parties and by restricting the ways unions can communicate with their members.

This year, with 36 governorships, all House seats and one-third of Senate seats up for election, as well as thousands of state and local offices, working families have the opportunity to mobilize in support of candidates who back real campaign finance reform and who champion issues that will strengthen workers and their families—and prevent another Enron.

Find out how you can get involved at www.aflcio.org/enron/index.

employees. Some Enron workers have testified they were unable to access their accounts even prior to Oct. 26.

Despite White's agreement to sever financial interests with Enron within 90 days of taking office last year, he continued to hold Enron stock into 2002, *The Washington Post* reported March 7.

White, who sets and oversees Army policy, has advocated privatizing military energy services, which would open the door for companies such as Enron to win contracts. When White took office in May 2001, Enron had bids in to operate the utilities at nine military bases in Texas.

White has admitted to 29 conversations since June with Lay and other top Enron officials in which he discussed the company's financial problems. During White's

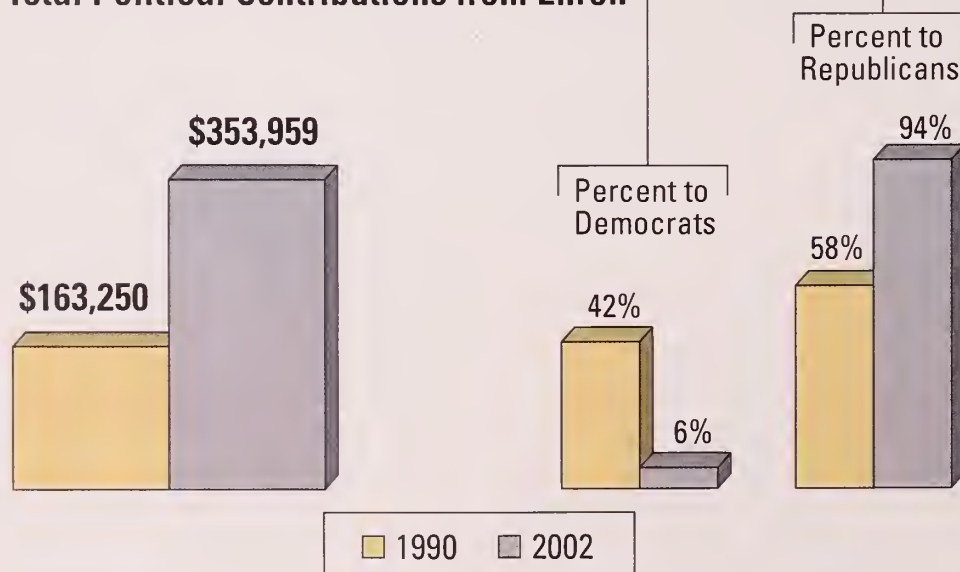
tenure, EES used aggressive profit projections and aggressive accounting to overstate its earnings by hundreds of millions of dollars, according to former employees.

Other Bush administration officials

Some of Bush's closest advisors are connected to Enron through campaign contributions, stock ownership, as former consultants or through other business ties. Because federal disclosure laws only require general estimates of stock value, exact holdings are not available.

Bush's senior political advisor and long-time strategist, Karl Rove, held between \$100,000 and \$250,000 in Enron stock when he took office. Lawrence Lindsey, assistant for economic affairs and director of the National Economic Council, which guides White House economic policy, earned \$100,000 from Enron as a consultant and member of Enron's Board of Advisors. U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick was paid \$50,000 as a member of Enron's advisory board and held \$15,000 to \$50,000 in Enron stock. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham received \$10,400 from Enron executives in his failed 2000 U.S. Senate re-election campaign. Before becoming chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Harvey L. Pitt was a lawyer representing the accounting firm Arthur Andersen. Today, the SEC is conducting investigations into irregularities and possible violations of law in Enron's collapse and into the role Arthur Andersen, Enron's auditor, may have played. @

Total Political Contributions from Enron



Resources for Action

Publications and websites offer rich resources on corporate accountability, shareholder strategies and union investment fund managing—and even a few pokes at the folks who brought you the Enron follies.

www.aflcio.org/enron—Enron's collapse took a dramatic toll on the lives of its employees, wiping out their jobs, health care and retirement. Visitors to this site can hear and see Enron workers telling their stories and learn about the AFL-CIO's "No More Enrons" campaign for better retirement security and corporate governance and take action as an e-activist.

www.aflcio.org/paywatch—Visit this site and join an e-campaign to stop runaway CEO pay, learn to track down CEO pay for any company and play Greed! The Executive PayWatch Board Game.

www.enronownsthegop.com—This website provides information on how Enron built its influence in Texas. Directed by Texas '02 and funded by Texas Democrats, visitors can use the site to e-mail Republican elected officials who have received contributions from Enron and ask them to return the money. Visitors also can sign up for an e-mail newsletter, read about Enron's influence with the Texas GOP and click on links to Enron-related cartoons.

www.enronx.org—This website by and for former Enron employees offers job-hunting services, as well as help finding health insurance and other benefits. A message board enables former employees to make their voices heard—and allows supporters to offer words of encouragement. The site also includes links to groups helping former employees organize to win justice for themselves and their families.

www.thedailyenron.com—Visitors will see up-to-date articles, analyses and actions surrounding the Enron crisis. The site is operated by American Family Voices, a nonprofit advocacy organization for progressive public policy on economic issues. The site features articles and links to "Other Voices" addressing the Enron issues, a documents page and an upcoming primer called "Enron 101." Visitors can sign up for e-mail alerts and click on "Back Talk" to e-mail in their own information and thoughts on the Enron disaster.

www.corporateinformation.com—One of the most comprehensive research sites for corporate data worldwide, this site features information on privately held and public companies by country, state, sector or stock symbol and links to hundreds of government and private sites with vital corporate data. Registration is required to access the basic free information.

www.corpwatch.org—The website of the San Francisco-based CorpWatch features information on corporate accountability, as well as globalization and environmental issues. A resource guide lets visitors locate information on corporations, while links tie to the websites of scores of activist organizations. The "Take Action" section offers information on getting active on a specific campaign. @

Working Capital The Power of Labor's Pensions

Responsible Investment of Workers' Capital

In *Working Capital: The Power of Labor's Pensions*, recently released by Cornell University Press, the authors warned about worker and community "collateral damage" that would result from short-sighted speculative investments such as Southeast Asian sweatshops, unsound mergers, derivative schemes and irrational dot-coms. Now, as both the collapse of overvalued high-tech stocks and the growing Enron scandal reveal, workers and their pension funds are paying the price for irresponsible investment and corporate regulatory and governance practices.

Working Capital seeks to devise strategies for money managers to invest worker pensions funds—their deferred wages—into socially and economically sound instruments that will produce long-term benefits for their funds, their communities and our economy. The authors question much of today's conventional investment thinking and challenge pension fund managers' narrow theory of value. As Steelworkers President Leo Gerard, a sponsor and co-author of the book, points out, "In light of the Enron catastrophe, movements to harness workers' capital and develop alternate investment strategies is more important than ever."

Labor pension fund trustees must understand how investment funds and assets are being managed. Responsible management of pensions should create greater growth and prosperity in the United States, with the long-term interest of pension plan beneficiaries best served through "active ownership" strategies for worker capital.

Working Capital, commissioned by the Heartland Labor Capital Network, brings together some of the most forward-thinking union writers in the United States and Canada to present economically targeted investment strategies for working people. For more information, visit www.heartlandnetwork.org. @

—Wayne Ranick, USWA Communications

Ad Busting the Union-Busters

It's no secret that employers will use a variety of tactics to thwart union organizing. So when a corporation recently went so far as to advertise "union avoidance experience" as a job requirement, union activists quickly countered with an ad buster action of their own.

Ann Crump, a staff representative and organizer at Communications Workers of America's Wisconsin state office, came across an ad for director of employee relations at Kohl's Department Stores on HotJobs.com, a top online job search website. The ad stated, "Union avoidance experience in a large manufacturing-distribution operation is required."

Crump faxed a letter to the Kohl's contact listed in the notice, calling the requirement "a direct slap in the face to all union workers who patronize Kohl's Department Stores." She sent copies to other CWA, central labor council and state federation leaders across the country, along with copies of the ad and its web address.

But when the activists accessed the website listing, they realized Kohl's had removed the offensive wording. "I see it as exposure," says Crump. "We caught them and they covered up." @

CWA Scores at Pebble Beach

When AT&T held its luxurious Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf extravaganza in early February, pairing top professional golfers with celebrities like Michael Bolton and Clint Eastwood, the company proudly announced it would donate a chunk of the proceeds to the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, Calif. The organization memorializes John Steinbeck, who wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Cannery Row* and other classic novels celebrating American workers and farmers struggling to get by and build a better life.

While AT&T chief executives may be deeply sensitive to the trials and aspirations of workers in Steinbeck's novels, Communications Workers of America Local 1150 leaders say AT&T has forgotten about its own employees: the 27,000 workers battling AT&T at the bargaining table in an attempt to win job security, higher

wages and better benefits.

So, some 40 local leaders and staffers traveled to the California tournament, distributing "We're fighting for the future of AT&T" leaflets. The leaflets, which praised AT&T's contribution to the National Steinbeck Center, also quoted from *The Grapes of Wrath*, noting, "We just wish AT&T's leadership had understood the book."

Union activists wore golf caps with the CWA logo and T-shirts that read, "CWA, The Backbone of AT&T." To be sure AT&T boss C. Michael Armstrong got the message, they

met him at the first hole and assigned groups to follow him at every hole thereafter. At the end, all 40 CWA activists joined Armstrong at the 18th hole.

The unflappable Armstrong apparently was taken aback. In a story line that would please Steinbeck, Armstrong "kept hitting balls all over the place," recalls Local 1150 President Laura Unger. "I asked him to autograph my CWA cap. At first, he didn't know what to do. He hesitated, but then the crowd yelled, 'Sign it! Sign it!' and he didn't have a choice. I'm going to keep that cap." @



Hole in one: CWA activists sent a message to AT&T that the struggles of the company's own workers are on par with those of fictional characters.

STEVE TISZA/CWA LOCAL 4250

The Virtual Apprentice

Although many children have packed up their Erector Sets in favor of clicking along on a computer, a section on the Bricklayers website enables today's cyberkids to both click and build.

The BAC U-Build-It Page gives kids a virtual building supply store of bricks, windows, doors, cornices and roofing material—and even throws in a couple of trees and statues. The challenge is to transform the pile of building material into one of three sample brick buildings or create a unique design.

BAC webmaster Wayne Nicolosi says the kids' page was developed with more than just fun in mind.

"Through our strategic planning initiative, Millennium Morning, we found out recruitment needs to start earlier, before high school. That's why the site is geared toward younger grade schoolers."

One of the site's goals, Nicolosi says, is to show that bricklaying and construction work are much more than lifting and carrying—bricklayers have to be smart and plan ahead, or they'll end up with the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

"We hope it works as a bridge between two cultures, computers and construction, and develops an interest in kids about the trades," he says.

That interest may be forming



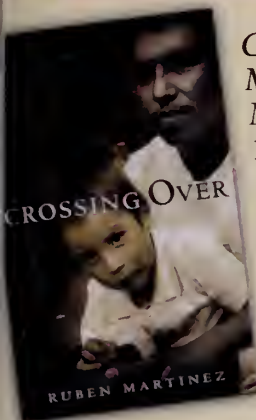
in one youngster. When the site was under development, Nicolosi consulted his five-year-old daughter Bianca—and she designed one of the three sample buildings from the supply of materials.

To test your building skills, visit www.bacweb.org/laborday/laborday_fun.htm. @

TRAINING

The AFL-CIO Organizing Institute and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance will hold an intensive three-day training program for Asian American and Pacific Islander workers and potential organizers April 19–22 in San Francisco. Covering the basics of organizing strategies and tactics, the training is open to anyone with a strong commitment to social and economic justice who has good communications skills and leadership qualities. For an application, call Quynh Nguyen, APALA organizing director, at 818-789-1579 or the Organizing Institute at 800-848-3021.

PUBLICATIONS



Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail, by Rubén Martínez, chronicles the lives of an extended Mexican family, skillfully weaving together their personal stories with a stark portrait of the promise and peril Mexican workers can face when—and after—crossing the U.S. border. Martínez, an associate editor at Pacific News Service and a contributor to PBS's "Religion & Ethics Newsweekly," begins with the deaths of three Chávez brothers, who were killed along with five others in 1996 after a pickup truck carrying 27 undocumented Mexican migrants flipped over while being chased by the U.S. Border Patrol. Through interviews with the brothers' family and friends, Martínez follows the immigrant trail to Wisconsin, Arkansas, Missouri and California. \$26 hardback. Metropolitan Books, www.henryholt.com.

by extensive research and interviews with participants. The workers, whose contract had expired, protested when the company instituted mandatory overtime. In response, then-Gov. Orville Freeman of Wisconsin, who Register interviews for the memoir, called in the National Guard, closed the plant and declared martial law in the town. \$13. Perennial, www.harpercollins.com.

MUSIC



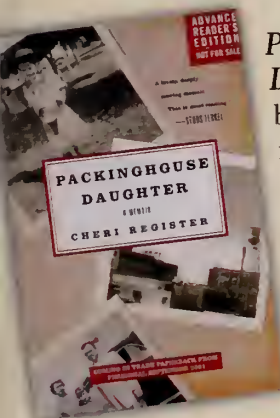
"Fanning the Flames of Discontent," by General Strike, combines a mix of original songs with traditional union tunes, including several from the Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the World).

The band often performs at union functions and strikes in the Northwest. Band members include Jim Cook, president of Letter Carriers Branch 82, Howard Rotstein, an SEIU Local 503 steward and Jay Russo, retired president of Clackamas County (Ore.) Education Association. \$15. To order the CD, visit the band's website at www.generalstrikeband.com.

TRAVEL

STITCH, a network of U.S. women unionists, organizers and Central America solidarity activists which aims to build connections between U.S. and Central American women for economic justice, is holding its Women's Language School Delegation to Guatemala May 25–June 2. Participants will build solidarity with Guatemalan women working in the apparel and other industries, and receive daily Spanish language instruction. The \$800 fee covers housing, meals, language instruction and travel within Guatemala. For information or an application, e-mail stitchdc@earthlink.net. To reserve a space, send \$75 by April 20 to STITCH, 1477 Monroe St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20010. Full fee is due by May 1.

Packhouse Daughter: A Memoir, by Cheri Register, recounts the 1959 strike at Wilson & Co. meat-packing plant in Albert Lea, Minn., through her recollections as the teenage daughter of a packhouse worker, which are bolstered



CONCERT

Billy Bragg and the Blokes, a worker-oriented, English pop-rock group that helped promote the AFL-CIO Campaign for Global Fairness during its 2000 American tour, is returning to the United States for



three weeks in April. The group released its latest CD in March, "Billy Bragg and the Blokes: England, Half English." To hear the new hit single, "No Power Without Accountability," click on www.billybraggonline.com/ecard. Concert dates include: New York City, April 11; Philadelphia, April 12; and Washington, D.C., April 13. For more information, visit www.billybragg.co.uk. @

UNION GEAR

The nonprofit Garment Industry Development Corp., founded by UNITE, is selling union-proud T-shirts as part of its campaign to aid in rebuilding the city's apparel industry in the wake of Sept. 11. Union-made T-shirts inscribed with "UNIONS"/"United We Stand" or "I ♥ N.Y. More Than Ever" are available. The back of each shirt sports an American flag and "UNITE! Proudly Made in New York." \$12 each. Proceeds are donated to union members who have experienced hardships since Sept. 11. For more information or an order form, call Esther Cheung at 212-857-6230.

I ♥ NY
MORE
THAN
EVER

Companies sink

while their CEOs get huge paychecks.

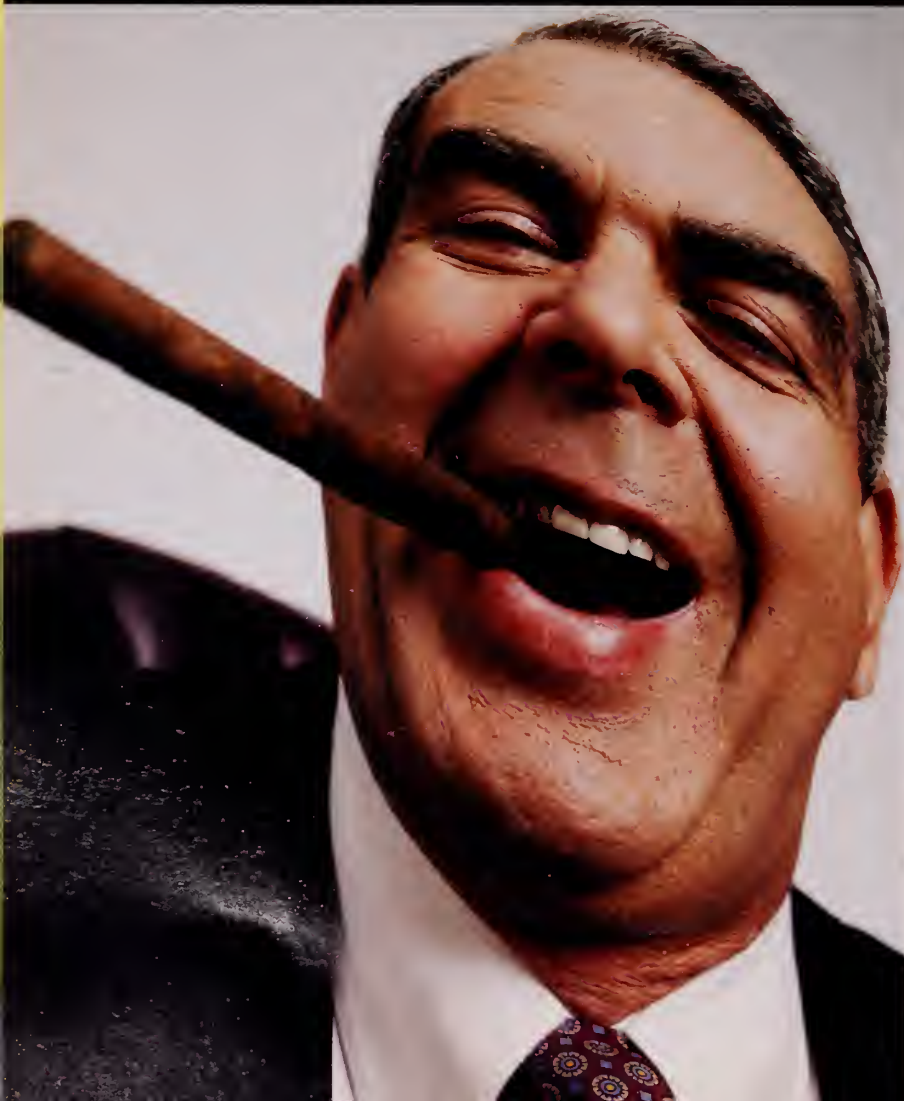
Workers and shareholders suffer

but CEOs get big bonuses.

Employees lose their retirement savings—

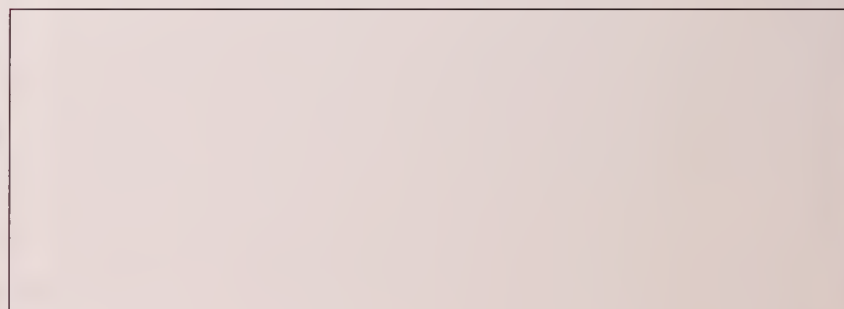
but CEOs get cushy,
guaranteed pensions.

And it's not just Enron.



Find out all about it on the
Executive PayWatch
website. Visit www.aflcio.org/paywatch today
for the latest on CEO compensation, bonuses and
retirement perks—the double standards that keep
CEOs fat and happy while the people who work
for them struggle.

www.aflcio.org/paywatch



Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

JUNE 2002

America @work

ALSO INSIDE:

\$47,000 Can't
See You Through
Retirement

What Are They
Trying to Hide?

Elected to Serve

Ask a Working
Woman

'Take the Money
and Run'



Bargaining Tough

"HELLO, I WANTED to take the time to thank your organization for the support you are showing us ex-Enron employees. I am stuck up here in New Jersey. Enron laid me off and then refused to bring me home to Houston, but I am trying to survive. Since I do not have the support that the Houston employees have, I am very thankful for your group....I just wanted to let you all know that every one of us ex-employees applaud all you do and I, for one, will be forever in your debt for anything additional you can get me."

—Theresa Connor-Smith, Middletown, N.J.

SAY WHAT?

How does your union work to ensure lawmakers support workers' freedom to gain a voice at work?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

ABOUT WHAT STEPS YOUR UNION IS TAKING TO AID MEMBERS DURING THE ECONOMIC RECESSION:

"OUR MEMBERS EXPERIENCED

the effects of the downturn before the Sept. 11 attacks. After Sept. 11, we switched to crisis management. We put 90 percent of our time into identifying our members in need through house calling and phone banks of our 5,000 members, about 4,000 were out of work by November. We developed a whole system of private resources to aid our members—some 40 to 50 organizations....We got the mayor and city council to revamp the unemployment system and extend jobless benefits to 39 weeks. We helped members find new jobs and are continuing to aid those still out of work."

—John Boardman, executive secretary-treasurer, HERE Local 25, Washington, D.C.

"[DE]SPITE WAL-MART'S power, size, popularity and enormous profits (it is now ranked the world's largest company), its workers earn appallingly low wages, while very few of them are even able to afford...the dismal and expensive benefits Wal-Mart barely offers....For the past three years, I have worked at Schnuck's [grocery store] in Decatur [Ill.] as the assistant meat department manager and have been a proud member of UFCW Local 1540 (now Local 1546)....Wal-Mart took away \$1 million in grocery business from the Decatur community. I firmly believe [Wal-Mart] put 113 United Food and Commercial Workers members out of work here....The company is also among the biggest importers of foreign-made goods....I have recently been hired at an Eagle store in Normal, and I will be a member of UFCW Local 536 in the meat department. It's worth it to make the 38-mile drive because I'm glad to have another UFCW union job...."—Robert Tripp, UFCW, Decatur, Ill.

"THE APRIL 8 issue of *TIME* magazine had an article on living wages. The article missed a point....Low wages do not pay the taxes needed to support defense, courts, the police, schools, jails, libraries, health care or Social Security. When a low-wage worker is sick, a living wage earner and their employer have to pay for the low-wage worker. America@work has long provided these kinds of statistics...and I am hopeful that tradition will continue with trying to add these numbers up to give an accurate picture instead of the half-whatever-view that a reporter provides when doing a story on the fly."—P. Harrison Picot II, Haymarket, Va., Communications Workers of America Local 37083

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.

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CONTENTS



4 In appreciation:
Monsignor George Higgins

5 CURRENTS

A voice on the phone,
a Voice@Work

Fighting for the living
'No more Enrons'

21 LIKE IT IS

Unions educate around
HIV/AIDS

22 OUT THERE

Ticket to ride
Hittin' the highway
Social Security hatchet job
O say can you pay homage
to Big Business?

23 HOMEPAGE

Exhibit: Tenement Museum
opens new, permanent tenement
apartment in New York City
Publications: *Global Backlash*
The CyberUnion Handbook
Kids Count Data Book
Campaign: Join the Justice for
Garment Workers Campaign
In the garden: A rose named in
honor of César Chávez
Websighting: Child labor issues
have a new forum
Education: Summer Schools
for Union Women

Cover: www.earldotter.com

Machinists member Rick Iacino Jr. is among 30,000 customer service
and ground workers beginning negotiations with Northwest Airlines.

8 BARGAINING TOUGH

With the jobless rate still soaring, workers facing major contract negotiations this year are holding strong for job and pension security, affordable health costs and a fair share of corporate profits

12 \$47,000 CAN'T SEE YOU THROUGH RETIREMENT

The American Prospect co-editor Robert Kuttner says a stagnant stock market shows the senselessness of privatizing Social Security

13 WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO HIDE?

Proving the pitfalls of the Bush Social Security privatization plan is easy with this one-page pullout highlighting what some lawmakers and congressional candidates don't want working families to know—until after the elections

14 ELECTED TO SERVE

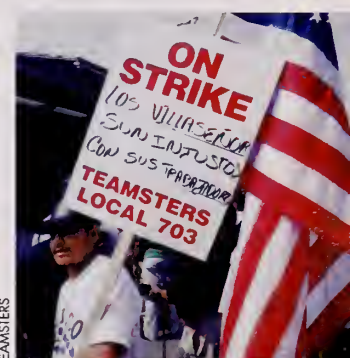
Union leaders nationwide are asking elected officials to help working families win a voice on the job

18 ASK A WORKING WOMAN

A 2002 AFL-CIO survey finds health care, retirement and equal pay and opportunity are working women's top concerns

20 'TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN'

Play the new AFL-CIO PayWatch game and see if you can match what CEOs did to their companies and workers with the payoffs they got in 2001



In Appreciation

Monsignor George Higgins

1916–2002

For decades, Monsignor George Higgins stood at the side of workers in their struggles for justice and during their celebrations of victory. Whether agitating with César Chávez and the Farm Workers in their tireless fight for a decent life in California's Coachella Valley in the 1960s, or offering a prayer of benediction in 1993 for a Department of Labor where the word "unions" had not been mentioned for years, Higgins was ever the champion of working men and women.

On May 1—International Workers' Day and the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker—Higgins died peacefully at home, surrounded by family, after dedicating a life to those who had no voice.

Monsignor George Higgins once wrote, "Long ago, I made up my mind never to turn down an invitation to offer a prayer at a trade union gathering." For decades, the women and men of the union movement saw him keep that commitment at more rallies and picket lines and organizing campaigns than anyone could count.

The grandson of Irish immigrants who toiled as railroad workers in the Midwest, Higgins was raised in a strongly pro-union environment. Attending seminary in Chicago, he received an early exposure to the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, while surrounded by the turbulence of the Depression years. Early on, he was influenced by a group that was then enormously important for the union movement: the labor priests.

"They became known as labor priests because, in season and out, they supported the God-given right of workers to organize and bargain collectively," he once recalled. They "made the unions their parishes." The labor priests set up labor schools where workers could learn how to organize, how to hold union elections—and how the church's social teaching was on the side of working people.

Higgins carried on their tradition. When the workers at Mercy General Hospital, part of the Catholic HealthCare West system,



were battling to organize into a union, Higgins was the "white-haired man of the cloth" who "rolled his wheelchair through the automatic doors" of the hospital.

The hospital administrators, who unsuccessfully opposed the workers' freedom to gain a voice at work—the workers celebrated their first contract in April—reportedly greeted Higgins with "tight smiles." No wonder. As one theologian said, "It would be almost like bringing in Gandhi."

Higgins's legacy

Higgins, who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000, the nation's highest civilian honor, spent a lifetime of work in promoting Catholic-Jewish dialogue and working to advance civil rights. An outspoken advocate of societies that value work and respect workers, Higgins ministered to thousands of

people over the trials and tribulations of social justice work, while acting as adviser to the nation's bishops for more than 50 years. Higgins brought his expertise to the classroom, lecturing at The Catholic University of America, while authoring, since 1945, the syndicated column "The Yardstick."

At the start of the 21st century, Higgins leaves a legacy of support for workers' struggles from many religious denominations. In Los Angeles, Catholic clergy joined community members to march and pray with 4,000 striking janitors in 2000 as congregations prepared food for the janitors. After three weeks on strike, the janitors won a 26-percent wage increase.

In the South, 41 Catholic bishops signed a pastoral letter in November 2000 called "Voices and Choices" describing the low wages and terrible working conditions in the poultry processing industry. The letter "does remind us of some basic Catholic teaching about labor and human rights," says Bishop Peter Sartain of Little Rock, Ark.

And across the country, seminarians from the Catholic Church and more than a dozen other faith groups have taken part in the AFL-CIO's Seminary Summer to work on union organizing campaigns and learn firsthand about the struggle for economic justice. While at their worksites, seminarians are assigned mentors from the clergy. One of the first Seminary Summer participants was Rachel Cornwell, who worked on the Catholic University Campaign. Her mentor? Monsignor George Higgins.

Historian Michael Kazin has recounted the early cooperation between the church and the union movement and concludes the union effort to reach out to the religious community today "is the best planned and most inclusive in labor's long history."

No one deserves more credit for its successes than Monsignor George Higgins. @

In His Own Words

Often serving as emissary and mediator between the union movement and the Catholic Church, Monsignor George Higgins sets forth in his memoir, *Organized Labor and the Church: Reflections of a Labor Priest* how best to build solidarity between the two.

- "Both labor and the churches have much to learn about each other....I would suggest, therefore, that both sides start off by getting to know one another in our local and regional communities and by listening to one another."
- "Don't try to convert the other party to your own agenda."
- "Beware of stereotypes. Church and labor people come in all shapes and sizes and so do their organizations....We ought to take people as we find them. There is no monolithic group on either side."
- "Build relationships and the issues will follow. The first order of business is to get to know and trust one another."

Fighting for the Living

Union members joined with families of the victims of the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center, rescue workers and religious leaders for a memorial service April 26 at Trinity Church in New York City. After the service, thousands of workers and community members marched to the World Trade Center site to pay tribute to the 3,000 people, including 600 union members, who lost their lives there.

"We must create a living memorial that will raise awareness of the need for safety and health of all workers," Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger told the crowd.

The April 26 event was one of the hundreds held in observance of Workers Memorial Day in communities around the world. As a fitting way to honor those killed on the job this past year, union, community and workplace safety activists vowed to fight for safer workplaces and help workers improve their lives through their unions. Workers Memorial Day, April 28, marks the anniversary of the signing of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

In conjunction with Workers Memorial Day, the AFL-CIO released its annual report on workplace fatalities and injuries, *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*, which found some 5,915 workers died in the workplace in 2000. To download the report, visit www.aflcio.org.



SAM HOLEN/HEAD/LABOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Remembering: Fire Fighters members were among thousands who gathered in New York City to pay tribute to those who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Income Gap Widens

Over the past two decades, the income gap between wealthy families and low- and middle-income families in the United States rose to historic highs, despite sustained periods of economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s, according to a recent study.

New York saw the greatest increase in income inequality over the 20 years—real income for the bottom fifth of families fell \$800, while the average income of the top fifth increased by \$56,800.

The income gap between the top 20 percent of families and the bottom 20 percent narrowed significantly in only one state—Alaska—and was unchanged in Arkansas, Mississippi, South Carolina and South Dakota.

Pulling Apart: A State-by-State Analysis of Income Trends, by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute, calls for a series of such policy initiatives as raising the minimum wage, strengthening unemployment insurance, implementing a wide range of supports for low-income working families, removing barriers to unionization and reforming regressive state tax systems to narrow the gap.

For a copy, visit www.epinet.org or www.cbpp.org.

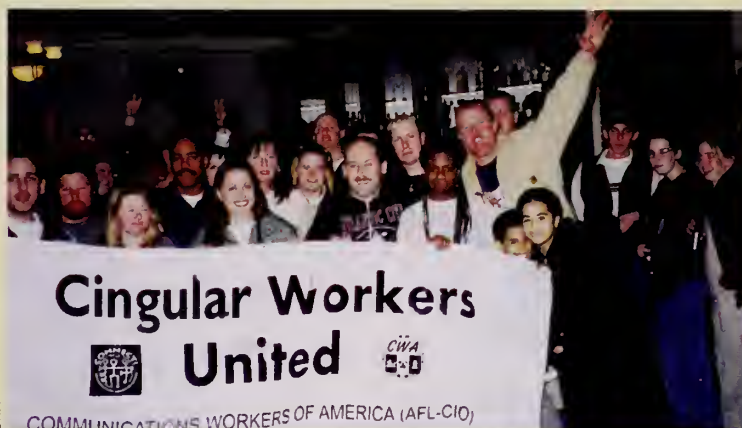
SPOTLIGHT

A Voice on the Phone, a Voice@Work

Employees at Cingular Wireless are reaping the benefits of the Communications Workers of America's bargaining to organize strategy, with more than 4,000 workers nationwide joining the union in the first four months of this year.

In 1996, CWA members mobilized to win a card-check agreement with SBC Communications, enabling workers at any newly created division of the company to form a union by signing cards indicating their desire for a voice on the job. The agreement allows workers to bypass the lengthy union election process that employers often exploit to launch anti-union intimidation campaigns.

When SBC merged its wireless unit with that of BellSouth to form Cingular Wireless in 2000, CWA negotiated card-check agreements for workers at the new high-tech firm, as well as pledges that managers would stay neutral during organizing campaigns.



A real voice: Cingular Wireless employees in Massachusetts celebrate after voting for a voice at work with CWA.

"The neutrality agreement did send the message that our jobs were not threatened," says Joe Lamkin, a worker who recently helped organize the customer call center in Ocean Springs, Miss. "In today's environment," where companies launch anti-union campaigns, "people are very leery" about standing up for their rights on the job, Lamkin says. Several organizing campaigns at nearby casinos have failed because managers fired the workers trying to form unions, he says.

By building strong committees of activists at each site, Cingular workers recently won card-checks among 240 retail store and technical employees in Indiana; 404 workers in Fayetteville, N.C.; and 510 customer service representatives in Johnson City, Tenn.

Ron Bigler, a researcher at Labor Research Associates in New York City, says, "Getting workers to take the risk of joining a union in the face of hostile anti-union campaigns waged by employers is a Herculean challenge. That's why unions must continue to bargain for neutrality agreements" in existing contracts. @

'No More Enrons'

Working families are demanding corporate accountability and stronger laws to protect workers' retirement security to prevent more Enron-like debacles that robbed workers of their retirement savings.

As part of the AFL-CIO's "No More Business as Usual" town hall meetings around the country, former Enron employees are telling how their retirement benefits were drained while company executives and highly

paid employees walked away with lucrative bonuses and pay outs.

"Enron executives stole my money and it wasn't even illegal," says Debra Johnson, a former Enron employee who took part in several town halls, which have drawn hundreds of community members in Milwaukee, Cleveland and elsewhere. "I'm here to make sure that laws and reforms are put into place to prevent another debacle."

Since the collapse of Enron, the AFL-CIO and retirement, pension and corporate accountability activists have rallied grassroots support for tough new laws governing 401(k) plans and stronger regulations covering corporate accountability. While the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives has watered-down 401(k) and corporate accountability legislation, stronger bills with better 401(k) protection for workers and tougher penalties for misconduct by corporate executives and boards of directors are pending in the U.S. Senate.

Town hall tours continue throughout June and July. To find out more, visit [@](http://www.aflcio.org/retirementsecurity)



Enron-ed: "Enron executives stole my money," says former Enron employee Debra Johnson.

Union Community Fund: Still Lending a Helping Hand

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, working families have donated more than \$3 million through the Union Community Fund to help those affected by the tragedy.

Launched two years ago by the AFL-CIO as the union movement's charity for working families, the Union Community Fund created a September 11th Fund that has distributed grants to 40 community organizations that serve working families.

These organizations have provided financial support to the families of those killed in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, as well as those who lost their jobs as a direct result of the tragedy. They have spearheaded training, job placement and social services to immigrants and others affected by the attacks and helped workers and their families gain access to public benefits available to victims. @

A New Alliance in Oregon

Uniting around a common vision for organizing and political action, Oregon activists unanimously adopted their New Alliance plan in May, becoming the fifth state to join the AFL-CIO's initiative to revamp and revitalize the union movement state by state.

"This convocation is the first step up a pathway toward greater strength for our movement and for social and economic justice," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told the 200 activists gathered in Portland.

Oregon's New Alliance plan includes a permanent, year-round political program and beefed-up support for organizing campaigns—a goal made possible because of the 40 percent increase in unions' affiliation with the Oregon AFL-CIO since the New Alliance effort began in the state.

With the New Alliance plan in place, Oregon working families will build on cooperative efforts such as the joint campaign between Operating Engineers Local 701 and Electrical Workers Local 112 in April to help 167 workers at Washington Defense Co.'s weapons incinerator win a voice on the job. Organizers from several unions in the state aided the effort by spending a week making house calls to workers. Activists also plan to fight a paycheck deception ballot measure expected this fall. @



Unified: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka (far right) joins Oregon union members as they formed a New Alliance.

Safe Staffing Needed Now

At least 126,000 nurses are needed to fill current hospital vacancies, according to the United American Nurses, citing American Hospital Association figures, and 1 million new nurses will be needed by 2010. Working conditions and pay are the major cause of the shortage. For more information, visit www.UANNurse.org.

And a new study by AFT Healthcare shows more than two-thirds of hospital workers, other than nurses, say there is a severe shortage in their professions. The study is part of AFT Healthcare's "Set Limits—Save Lives" campaign for safe staffing ratios in hospitals. Free copies are available at 202-879-4508 or at [@](http://www.aft.org/healthcare/whatsnew)

Kaiser Must Pay \$100 Million

Steelworkers' solidarity at Kaiser Aluminum Corp., where 3,000 workers were locked out illegally for 20 months in 1999 and 2000, triumphed May 15 when a National Labor Relations Board administrative law judge required Kaiser to pay workers \$100 million.

Kaiser, which filed for bankruptcy protection in February, used the lockout to unlawfully try to force the union to accept a contract containing an illegal "blank-check" wage proposal according to the administrative law judge. The NLRB estimated Kaiser's potential back pay liability at more than \$100 million.

"If the company is really serious about restructuring and returning to profitability, it's time for management to start obeying the law and work with us to build a stronger Kaiser Aluminum," says USWA President Leo Gerard. @

Take Action on Urgent Legislation

As congressional negotiators meet to resolve differences between two versions of Fast Track trade authority, workers and their unions are lobbying members of Congress to vote against the conference report. Fast Track, which passed the Senate in May, passed the House in December by only one vote, and unions hope to persuade enough House members to switch votes and vote against Fast Track when the measure comes up again.

The bills hand the "keys to our democracy to giant corporations—taking away the Congress's right and responsibility to amend trade deals negotiated by the president," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Both Senate and House bills contain identical language prohibiting enforceable workers' rights in future trade agreements. The Senate bill couples Fast Track with an expanded Trade Adjustment Assistance program that partially subsidizes

health insurance for workers who lose their jobs because of trade, but ignores the health insurance needs of retired steelworkers whose former employers declared bankruptcy as a result of unfair trade. To send a message to your member of Congress to vote against Fast Track, visit www.aflcio.org.

Meanwhile, the House May 15 reauthorized the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, also known as "workfare." When the bill comes up in the Senate this month, Democratic senators plan to introduce amendments to eliminate many of the anti-worker provisions of the House bill. The House version, pushed by the Bush administration, would increase the work requirement for welfare recipients and allow states to receive "super waivers" that could be used to bypass labor laws. Call your Senators and urge them to eliminate the anti-worker provisions of the TANF reauthorization bill. @

OUT FRONT

Tim Oaks wanted a union because he was fed up with 12- to 15-hour days, sweltering conditions, verbal abuse from managers and an inadequate pension at what was then The Earthgrains Co. in London, Ky.

Chuck Beverlin wanted a union because he and co-workers were falling victim to repetitive motion injuries at a Honda Motor Company Inc. plant in Marysville, Ohio.

Tasha Ellis wanted a union at U-Haul in Jersey City, N.J., to turn her part-time job into a full-time position with benefits and a salary that would support her two children.

And all of them—and tens of thousands more who want a union voice at work—faced vicious anti-union campaigns by their employers, complete with the threats and intimidation that have become routine when workers try to exercise their freedom to choose a union.

The right to form a union is supposed to be guaranteed by law in this country and is an internationally recognized basic human right. But, as we witness too often, "Freedom of association is a right under severe pressure when workers in the United States try to exercise it," according to *Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States Under International Human Rights Standards*, a report by Human Rights Watch.

This month—*Voice@Work Month*—workers fighting to form unions are exposing this employer war in communities throughout America. They're letting their neighbors know why they want a union and the loathsome tactics their employers are using to block their freedom to decide for themselves whether to have a union. They are engaging community allies—social justice, civil rights, student and religious groups—in their struggle. And many are seeking and winning the support of elected officials (see page 14).

We know public and community support will be crucially important in helping thousands of these workers win union contracts that bring better, safer jobs and stronger families and communities. But large-scale change and the true freedom to join together in a union will come only when we reform America's inadequate labor laws—which employers ignore so routinely we're surprised when one plays by the rules.

As the fall election season approaches, and as you plan for future elections, tie your endorsements and your votes to candidates' willingness to take a front-and-center role in ensuring all workers have the freedom to choose a union. It is more important than ever to mobilize our members to elect candidates to every level of office who will stand with workers seeking a better life through union membership. At the federal level, we are building a congressional majority that will fight to reform America's labor laws. Change won't come overnight—but it will come if we put the building blocks for labor law reform into place—starting now. @

America Needs a Voice@Work



VIRGINIA LEE HUNTER

BY JOHN J. SWEENEY



RICK REINHARD

Fighting for Fair Pay

Women's rights activists and union members joined elected officials at events across the country April 16, Equal Pay Day. In 2000, the average woman worker was paid 73 cents for every dollar a man was paid. This year, April 16 symbolically marked the day women's wages caught up with men's wages from the previous year. At the U.S. Capitol, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson (center), Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) (far left), Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) (left), Washington Freedom soccer player Ann Cook (right) and others called for passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and DeLauro. @

In a rough economic climate,
workers and their unions are

Bargaining Tough

BY JAMES B. PARKS



After 23 years on the job, Dallas Colton thought his job as a machinist at Boeing Co. in Seattle was safe. But last October, he was notified he would be laid off in two months. Colton, a member of Machinists District 751, says he was shocked at being laid off but knows the reason: His job had been contracted-out to a nonunion firm.

With the help of his union, Colton started work as a mechanic at Boeing's Everett, Wash., plant three days after he was laid off in December.

Now, with contract talks between IAM and Boeing under way, Colton says he hopes the new pact contains "very, very, strong job security language" to protect him and his co-workers.

When airlines began cutting back orders for new planes after Sept. 11, Boeing announced it would lay off 30,000 workers by the end of the year. But Colton says the job security issue goes deeper than just a business downturn. "I think Boeing is using what's going on to intimidate people. When leaders of a company the size of Boeing say 'if you don't like it, quit'—that's not cool."

Colton is among hundreds of thousands of workers whose union contracts expire in coming months and who find themselves in difficult negotiations.

Major contracts in aerospace, transportation, telecommunications and local government are on the bargaining table. As businesses recover from the post Sept. 11 economic fallout and the collapse of Enron and other major corporations, workers and their unions are focusing on job and pension security as well as health care costs and fair sharing of corporate profits with workers.

Two major contract negotiations so far this year illustrate how tough bargaining might be. After two years of negotiations—and within two days of a strike deadline—IAM members at United Airlines ratified a new five-year pact in February that gives top-scale mechanics a 37 percent raise, their first wage increase since 1994.

In the second pact, PACE International Union members rejected several proposed agreements with Shell Oil Co. until they won successor and job security language.

Whatever it takes: Teamsters rally in support of a strong UPS contract that will cover some 210,000 workers.

Aerospace

Saving good jobs is a high priority for the two largest unions at Boeing—IAM and the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace/International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers. The two contracts, cover some 70,000 employees, and IAM negotiations at Boeing begin June 25.

"The aerospace industry was already in a downturn in 2001 after seven years of growth," Sleigh says. "The Sept. 11 attacks turned a contraction into a huge downward spiral."

Spending on new planes plummeted after the attacks. John W. Douglass, president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association, an industry trade group, told a House Armed Services subcommittee March 19 the industry will lose \$15 billion over the next two years.

The nosedive in aerospace means contract talks this year will focus on retaining benefits and jobs, Sleigh says, unlike talks in 1999 when industry profits were at the highest level in recent years. The union's goal now is to keep union jobs in the United States and Canada by limiting outsourcing, he says.

Wages, benefits and job security also will be the priority bargaining issues for SPEEA. Workers in Boeing's technical units are underpaid, says SPEEA Executive Director



Don't cut jobs: Members of CWA locals 3106 and 3151 in Jacksonville, Fla., walk an informational picket line in front of the local AT&T office.

The four-year agreement also maintains health care benefits.

Negotiations on all fronts will be arduous, especially for health care and pension issues, says Michael H. Belzer, academic director of industrial relations at Wayne State University in Detroit. "Because we don't have a national health care program or national pension plan, companies provide and pay for both. And health care costs are going up. Companies have wrung as much cost savings as they can from managed care systems," he says.

Workers' retirement benefits are on the line as well. While defined-benefit plans are more secure for workers because they guarantee a retirement income, employers increasingly have been shifting to less secure defined-contribution plans. In 2000, some 55 million workers participated in defined-contribution plans and 22 million in defined-benefit plans, according to Bernstein Investment Research and

Management. This is a dramatic shift in the ratio from 1975, when 11 million were in defined-contribution plans and 27 million were covered by defined-benefit plans.

Job security issues will be key in almost all negotiations as well. In the six months after Sept. 11, employers announced layoffs of more than 1.2 million workers—and with the jobless rate still high despite signs of an economic recovery, workers will be looking to ensure their jobs are secure.

"The effect of Sept. 11 cannot be overstated," says Steve Sleigh, IAM's strategic resources director. "No one was prepared for the drop off of jobs everywhere. And when one large company cuts back, that has a ripple effect—taking down suppliers and other businesses—making everyone's job less secure."

Here is a look at negotiations in four sectors:



Hammering out a pact: "Our national security is weakened every time Boeing signs another contract to ship jobs and technology overseas," says IAM President R. Thomas Buffenbarger.

Transportation



Road to victory: Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa addresses a rally of UPS workers in Las Vegas, as part of the "UPS Contract Caravan."

Charles Bofferding. SPEEA's contract, which the workers gained after a 40-day strike in 2000, expires Dec. 1.

National security also is at stake in the talks, says IAM President R. Thomas Buffenbarger. "Our national security is weakened every time Boeing signs another contract to ship jobs and technology overseas."

The situation was much the same at United Airlines and at Lockheed Martin Corp.'s Marietta, Ga., plant. At United, 25,000 ramp and customer service workers and security guards, all IAM members, in May ratified contracts that provide pay increases and better health care and pension benefits. Negotiations for contracts covering 30,000 IAM customer service and ground workers at Northwest Airlines (cover), Alaska Airlines and Southwest Airlines begin soon. The workers plan to seek an agreement similar to the United contract.

Workers at the Lockheed plant ended a 48-day strike April 28 after ratifying new contracts. The strike began when the IAM members rejected the company's final offer because of concern over job security. Union jobs at the Marietta plant have declined from 7,000 in 1990 to 2,800 this year, even though the company has gained several lucrative new contracts.

The Teamsters are mobilizing members and community allies in a "Whatever It Takes" campaign to gain a fair contract at United Parcel Service that addresses loss of union jobs through subcontracting and forced overtime. The current UPS contract covering 210,000 full- and part-time employees expires July 31. To help speed up negotiations, IBT members in May authorized union leaders to call a strike if necessary.

"Despite the current recession, UPS continues to report healthy margins as it retains the title as the most profitable package delivery company," IBT General President James P. Hoffa says.

Since the last contract was signed in 1997 after a 16-day strike, UPS net income skyrocketed 216.5 percent in 2000, while Teamsters wages increased 2.8 percent. At the time, the company also promised to create 10,000 new full-time jobs, 2,000 in each year of the contract. But management reneged on its promise—until a February 2000 arbitrator's ruling in favor of IBT ultimately forced UPS to agree to create the jobs by this summer. The union says the company refused to hire the new workers because it was relying on part-timers, managers and outside contractors to avoid

hiring full-time workers and paying living wages and benefits that include health and retirement coverage.

As the new jobs are being created, the Teamsters plan to seek wage increases for all UPS workers, whether they work full- or part-time. For Marlene Evans, a member of Local 952 in Orange County, Calif., the pay hike for part-timers is critical. "Their wages are way too low," Evans says. "I started 12 years ago and the wages aren't much higher now than they were then."

Protecting jobs also is an issue for the 10,000 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in their talks with the Pacific Maritime Association. Those negotiations, launched in April, are focusing on strategies for the industry to implement new technology without endangering jobs.

Historically, whenever new technology has been introduced on the nation's docks, ILWU and management have agreed that union members would do the work and be trained to operate the new machinery, while workers would share in the wealth created by the changes, says Communications Director Steve Stallone. Now management is using technology to replace union jobs, he says, by contracting with non-union companies to document the movement of cargo on the docks—a traditional ILWU job.

Telecommunications



No static: AT&T workers were fighting for their future in recent contract talks, says CWA President Morton Bahr.

Like the nation's dock workers, members of the Communications Workers of America and the Electrical Workers in their successful talks with AT&T sought guarantees that union members will be trained for and move into new jobs being created by technology and mergers.

CWA and IBEW's bargaining goals for the 29,000 employees—which resulted in contracts for both unions on April 13—included access for members to jobs in the growth areas of the company—mainly high-tech services for businesses. The pacts also include improvements in retirement security, maintaining quality health care, improved working conditions for customer service representatives and the ability for workers to make a fair choice about union representation.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney had said if AT&T refused to reach a fair and reasonable agreement with CWA and IBEW "in a timely fashion," the federation would switch its AT&T accounts to "employers that respect their employees' rights and show concern for their welfare." Sweeney also called on affiliated unions to do the same.

AT&T has cut more than 20,000 jobs over the past four years. The July 2001 spinoff of AT&T Wireless and the proposed merger of AT&T Broadband operations with Comcast Business Communications leave consumer and business services as the core of the company. Yet even as workers are hit with layoffs, top executives are rewarding themselves with multimillion-dollar compensation packages and new jobs—with extensive job security protections—at the new broadband company, AT&T Comcast Corp.

While employees were losing their jobs and stockholders losing their money—the value of AT&T's stock has dropped 60 percent in the past two years—CEO and Chairman C. Michael Armstrong was paid more than \$27 million in total compensation and stock options in 2000. (For more information on Armstrong and the pay packages of other CEOs, visit www.aflcio.org/paywatch.)

When negotiations began, AT&T immediately demanded steep concessions in health care benefits and disability coverage, including doubling co-payments for hospital stays, increasing premiums and raising prescription drug costs.

But the unions resisted the concession demands and each gained a contract that provided employment security. The contract specifies the process through which the union can ask for a review of work being performed by managers to determine if it should be restored to the union workers. A committee to review and offer alternatives to all subcontracting initiatives has been set up, as well as one targeted at finding new areas of work for union members. The unions and the company also agreed to form a high-level committee to review AT&T's merger plans and the unions' needs for employment security and access to work.

The 18-month agreement also retains health care benefits for retirees and active employees and protects workers' pension benefits. CWA members across the country held a "National Day of Action on Health Care" March 27 wearing bandages and using crutches and wheelchairs to demonstrate that AT&T's plan to cut health care benefits "was a sick idea." Members also held informational pickets throughout the country April 11. Carrying signs that said, "Cut executives' pay, not the employees," workers sent the message they were determined to prevent job losses.

Public sector

A combination of factors—the recession, skyrocketing health care costs, staggering unemployment and years of tax giveaways to wealthy individuals and big corporations—mean state and local governments across the country face a \$50 billion cumulative budget deficit. At the same time, federal aid to states is drying up as more and more money—\$37.7 billion in fiscal year 2003, up from \$19.5 billion in 2002—is targeted for homeland security.

The shortfall affects practically every state. In Florida, a combination of massive tax cuts and a loss of \$350 million in pension funds invested in Enron Corp. stock, have left the state with few resources. Since Sept. 11, the state has cut \$1 billion from education, forcing local schools to cancel summer school, drop plans to hire new teachers and consider eliminating student athletics, says Florida AFL-CIO President Cindy Hall. Gov. Jeb Bush (R)—who is pushing a new \$262 million tax break for businesses in the midst of this financial crisis—already has privatized services for people with disabilities, throwing hundreds of workers out of jobs. Bush recently jettisoned job security rules for 16,000 career service workers by making them "at will" workers who have no seniority or bumping rights and who can be fired for any reason without recourse.

Public-sector unions are calling on government leaders to be sensible about finding ways to make up the revenue shortfall without laying off vital workers. "Working families across the country are already getting battered," AFSCME President Gerald McEntee says. "Now some of their elected leaders want to cut drastically the services they depend on and lay off the hard-working employees who deliver them. It's up to us to show these officials that there are smarter and fairer ways to close budget gaps."

To balance state and local budgets without shifting the burden to workers, AFSCME is proposing state and local governments suspend scheduled tax cuts, pool the purchasing power of employees and retirees to force companies to offer lower drug prices and tap state and local government "rainy day" funds.

The budget crunch and job security are the main issues in two New York City con-



State by state: AFSCME President Gerald McEntee addresses thousands of state, county and municipal employees in Wisconsin protesting in front of the state capitol in Madison to demand a fair shake during budget negotiations.

tract negotiations. Talks are under way on a contract covering 125,000 service workers, members of AFSCME District 37, that expires July 1. The union actively is researching ways to save money in city services to help ease the city's \$5 billion revenue shortfall and save jobs, says District 37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts.

At the same time, negotiations are continuing for the city's 140,000 public school teachers, librarians and other professionals who have been without a contract for 19 months.

Another high-profile negotiation will involve New York City's nearly 9,000 Fire Fighters whose heroism during the Sept. 11 attacks was heralded throughout the nation. Their contract expires Aug. 1.

In Los Angeles, 38,000 service workers, employed by the Unified School District, are seeking to avoid layoffs and to gain language that gives employees input into their work. California faces an \$18 billion deficit and 95 percent of the school district's funding comes from the state, says Tom Newberry, SEIU Local 99 chief negotiator. As a result of the shortfall, it is unclear which programs Gov. Gray Davis (D) will fund, so workers are not focusing on a pay raise in the pact, which expires June 30. Instead, says Newberry, "we want to make sure we don't suffer any layoffs." @

Can't See You Through Retirement

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

Pity the people who want to replace Social Security with private investment accounts. Their timing hardly could be worse.

The stock market is flat, and many economists believe it will be fairly flat for a long time to come. Many people who were looking forward to comfortable retirements on inflated 401(k) plans have been socked by a down market. They are very grateful for those Social Security checks—the one part of our patchwork retirement system that absolutely is guaranteed.

Meanwhile, the Social Security Trustees' latest annual report projects that Social Security is healthier than previously thought. Last year's projection had the system needing a new infusion of funds in 2038. Now, thanks to better economic and demographic news, the system is fine until 2041.

Even the famous shortfall still leaves the system with an income stream adequate to pay three-quarters of its projected commitments for 75 years. A modest adjustment in taxes, benefits, or an infusion of general government funding (as its architects recommended in 1935) would leave the system solvent indefinitely.

If the news in the trustees' report had been bad, there would have been press conferences and publicity offensives. The Bush administration just quietly released the report, as required by law, and hoped nobody would notice.

The Bush administration, much of Wall Street and the privatization crusade need to portray a system in crisis in

order to sell individual investment accounts as Social Security's salvation. But even with a healthier stock market, there's one huge fallacy in the argument.

Recall that Social Security is an intergenerational compact: Current payroll taxes pay the

benefits of current retirees. Unless we want to break faith with today's retirees (which is politically inconceivable), a massive diversion of today's payroll taxes into new private retirement accounts for the next generation of retirees would leave Social Security with a gaping deficit.

So Bush's supposed fix actually would make the financing problem worse—to the tune of several trillion dollars. If Bush were serious about such a shift, he would have refrained from cutting taxes by nearly \$2 trillion and used that money to restructure Social Security for the long term.

The Democrats' version of that fix was the famous “lockbox”—the use of budget surpluses in this decade to sock away money to shore up the present system four decades from now. But Bush, dishonestly, would spend the same money twice.

And the problem with privatization doesn't end there. The stock market has just

enjoyed two decades of growth at a completely unsustainable rate. Even with the bust in technology stocks and a roughly 50 percent decline in the values of the broader market from its peak in 2000, price-earnings ratios still are above 1929 levels.

No reputable economist thinks the market can grow in the next decade at anything like its pace of the past two decades. Some predict a fairly long period of market stagnation.

So younger workers just putting money into 401(k) plans are very unlikely to get the returns projected by enthusiasts of privatization. Even older workers nearing retirement age did not benefit from the great bull market of the 1990s nearly as much as we might think, because stock ownership in the United States is concentrated so narrowly.

Advocates of privatization often make much of the fact that about half of Americans own some amount of stock, either directly or through pension plans. But only when you get to the top 10 percent of the population does this start adding up to serious money.

A study of 1998 data (the most recent available) looked at people ages 55 to 64 and found that even in this age group, 46 percent owned no stock at all. The median value of stocks held was just \$47,000 and that's not enough to see you through retirement.

As corporations have shifted away from traditional pension plans that guarantee retirees a fixed pension as long as they live, fewer and fewer pensioners have adequate retirement income. Here again, the value of Social Security as the system's one absolutely solid anchor becomes more essential, not less.

Certainly it would make sense to broaden pension coverage and to help people of modest means accumulate stocks and other financial assets for their retirement. A society where everyone is a stakeholder is an attractive idea—but not at the expense of Social Security. Ironically, some \$2 trillion in tax revenues, which could have brought such a system about, have been sacrificed on the altar of Bush's tax cuts. @

Robert Kuttner is co-editor of The American Prospect, a biweekly magazine of progressive political analysis. Reprinted with permission.

'Need Social Security to Survive'

When **Roberta Saxton**, 74, retired in 1993 from her job as a custodian at the University of Maryland, the only financial support she had to fall back on was Social Security. She worries that if the Social Security system is privatized, future generations of workers—including her eight children, 19 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren—will have no income in their retirement.

“They shouldn't bother our Social Security,” she says. “It's all we've got.” Saxton, a member of the Alliance for Retired Americans, says the recent Enron scandal in which thousands of employees lost their pensions is a good example of why Social Security—the nation's one stable retirement fund—should not be tampered with. “That's what happens when retirement is in the hands of private corporations,” Saxton says. A reliable Social Security system is important to women workers, says Saxton, who is single.

“Women make less than men when they are working and they get smaller pensions. So they need that Social Security check to survive.”



JAY MALIN

Spread the word to union members about the dangers of privatizing Social Security by copying and distributing this one-page pullout at union meetings, worksites, rallies and get-out-the-vote events.

Most Republican leaders and candidates don't want to talk about **Social Security** until *after* the November congressional elections.

What Are They Trying to Hide?

President George W. Bush and Republicans in Congress want to drain Social Security funds to create private accounts. But they don't want to talk about their scheme until *after* the November congressional elections. Here's why:

- Privatizing Social Security would cut benefits. Guaranteed benefits could be cut by more than 40 percent.
- One privatization proposal would raise the retirement age—even though it already is scheduled to increase to 67.
- Benefits would be cut even for people who choose not to participate in the private account scheme. Although supporters claim private accounts would be “voluntary,” the benefit cuts would affect *everyone*.
- Guaranteed benefits would be cut even *more* for people participating in the private account scheme. In addition to across-the-board cuts for all retirees, guaranteed Social Security benefits would be reduced further for those with the private accounts to offset the money deposited in those accounts.
- Privatizing Social Security is enormously expensive. Transitioning to private accounts would cost more than \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. The only way to pay for privatization would be through even more Social Security benefit cuts, tax increases or a return to big, big federal budget deficits.
- Private accounts are risky, unlike today's Social Security benefits. Retirement security is far too important to gamble on private accounts. Ask Enron workers—they lost millions from their 401(k) plans when Enron's stock became worthless.
- Privatization would cut benefits for survivors and people with disabilities. Despite the president's promise to “preserve” these programs, Social Security's crucial benefits for people with disabilities and survivors of workers who have died would be cut right along with retiree benefits.
- Bush's privatization scheme would weaken Social Security. With no changes at all, Social Security will be in fine fiscal shape and able to pay 100 percent of benefits until 2041. Taking payroll tax money out of Social Security to fund privatized individual accounts would push Social Security into financing trouble as early as 2026.

Don't let them hide!

Find out *before* the November congressional elections where your members of the new Congress stand. When candidates ask for your vote—ask for theirs. Attend candidate forums and phone your members of Congress.

Demand to know how they will vote on Bush's Social Security privatization scheme.



www.aflcio.org

ELECTED TO SERVE

Union leaders are ensuring that elected officials—from local lawmakers in Washington State to congressional representatives in Massachusetts—play a crucial role in helping workers win a voice on the job

BY LAUREN LAZAROVICI

Union leaders and activists are refining strategies for involving elected officials in organizing campaigns—and seeing results. By ensuring elected officials meet with workers to hear their stories and in seeking lawmakers' intervention with employers who try to thwart workers' efforts to gain a voice at work, union leaders are cultivating important allies as part of community-focused campaigns that also mobilize religious, civil rights and neighborhood groups. "Support from elected officials can help frame the union cause as a public cause and that is often essential to organizing efforts," says Cynthia Estlund, a law professor at Columbia University who writes widely on labor law and employee rights.

Also crucial is the support of elected officials in passing legislation safeguarding workers' right to form unions. State and local laws may help build support for eventual changes in federal labor laws by providing models and building consensus, says Estlund. Union leaders are "exploring the outer limits of state and local lawmaking to lower some of the barriers to organizing," she notes. Here are some examples of workers' victories when they involve elected officials in their struggles for a voice on the job.



It's academic: Graduate student employees at Temple University in Philadelphia gained a voice at work with AFT and saw how a lawmaker's support can help them make their case to the community.

ONE

A KEY ONE-ON-ONE RELATIONSHIP

When graduate student employees at Temple University in Philadelphia began mobilizing in 1999 to form a union with AFT, administrators fought them every step of the way. As part of a community campaign, union activists reached out to Shirley Kitchen, the state senator representing the university neighborhood, who had a longstanding, one-on-one connection to the then-president of the diverse, urban campus. When this key legislator spoke out in favor of the workers' right to organize, the employer listened.

"Shirley Kitchen was one of our strongest supporters," says Rob Callahan, the lead organizer of Temple University Graduate Students' Association. She spoke directly to the university president, Peter Liacouras, letting him know she wanted the university to allow an election and honor the results. After many delaying tactics, Temple acceded to a March 2001 election, and a strong majority of the 550 graduate employees voted for the union. This April, the workers and Temple reached a contract settlement.

"The unions here even the playing field for working people," says Kitchen. In turn, political leaders also help level the field for workers. "When an elected official gets involved, it does make a difference," she says.

Callahan says unions seeking to involve elected officials need to ensure politicians meet with workers—who also are consti-

tuent—*to hear about their struggles first-hand. Involving elected officials in campaigns is essential to demonstrating unions' roles in uplifting the whole community, says Callahan. "Elected officials will demonstrate that it is not only workers who have something at stake—the community does, too."*

TWO

STANDING UP TO EMPLOYER INTIMIDATION

Like most employers, managers at the Saint-Gobain/Norton Co. in Worcester, Mass., tried to intimidate workers who were trying to form a union at the abrasives plant. But unlike most employers, the company filed a National Labor Relations Board complaint designed to silence a U.S. congressman who supported the workers' campaign. After a majority of the 840 workers voted to join UAW in August, Saint-Gobain told the NLRB the election was unfair because Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.) supported the campaign publicly, appearing at rallies and writing the workers a letter in which he stated he would vote for the union if he worked at the plant.

"I knew the company was trying to intimidate me and other elected officials," says McGovern. "I decided to fight back so that they knew they weren't succeeding." Indeed,

JUNE IS VOICE@WORK MONTH

Union activists nationwide are declaring June *Voice@Work Month*. Workers are holding rallies and hearings with their allies to shine a spotlight on the obstacles they face when trying to win a voice at work and what elected officials can do to ensure fairness. U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) plans to hold a hearing in Washington, D.C., at which workers will talk about their struggles in seeking a union voice at work.

For information about *Voice@Work Month* events in your area, contact your local central labor council or state federation or Andy Levin at the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department, 202-639-6229 or alevin@aflcio.org. Look for coverage of *Voice@Work Month* events at www.aflcio.org/voiceatwork and in future issues of *America@work*.

Steering a strategy: UAW activists cultivate elected officials' support by asking candidates whether they are willing to directly back organizing campaigns—a strategy that worked for more than 800 employees at Saint-Gobain in Massachusetts.

McGovern continued speaking out in favor of the workers and other elected officials who had been involved with the campaign—from the state's two U.S. senators to the city council—rallied to his defense. In December, the NLRB ruled 2–1 that McGovern's involvement did not invalidate the election.

UAW activists cultivate elected officials' support by asking candidates whether they are willing to directly back organizing campaigns, inoculating them against companies' anti-union tactics and taking an ongoing and active role in politics. When political leaders "insist on our support, we should insist on theirs," says UAW Region 9A Director Phil Wheeler. "What Jim McGovern did took a lot of courage," says Wheeler. "More elected officials need to look at him as an example."

For his part, McGovern says more unions could look to UAW as an example. "It's not enough to ask elected officials to vote the right way," he says. "You have to ask them to get involved. I tell union leaders, 'Don't be a cheap date.'" When talking with his peers in Congress, McGovern tells them, "If you believe that workers have a right to organize, then get involved and work with them."

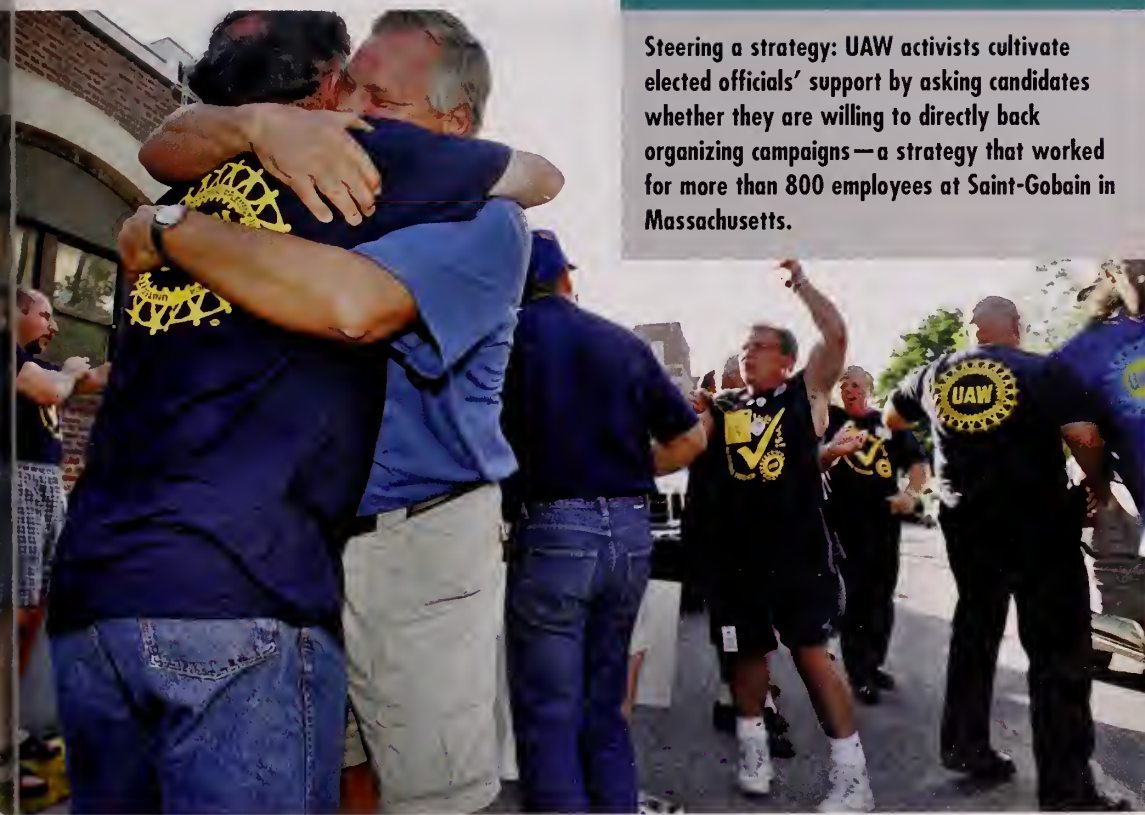
THREE

A BRIDGE TO THE COMMUNITY

After 90 V&V Supremo Foods workers in Chicago formed a union with Teamsters Local 703 in October 2000, the treatment the cheese processors got from the company was far from appetizing. Faced with intimidation and harassment, the mostly Latino workers went on strike and then were locked out. Enlisting the help of a key area congressman, the workers fought back and won a strong contract in January.

Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.), a longtime advocate of immigrant workers' rights nationally, represents the Pilsen neighborhood where many V&V Supremo workers live. Local 703 activists met with Gutierrez, described the obstacles they were facing at the plant and briefed him on a realistic action plan that relied on the workers' strong sense of solidarity.

"The workers are very committed to each other," says Tom Stiede, Local 703 secretary-treasurer. "That gave us credibility. Gutierrez



could count on us to finish what we'd started." The high point of Gutierrez's involvement in the campaign was his dramatic support for a boycott of V&V Supremo products. At a news conference, he held up a package of the cheese, proclaimed he would not allow it in his house until the company respected workers' wishes for dignity on the job—and threw it in the trash.

With Gutierrez acting as a bridge to the community, Local 703 activists reached out to area churches where workers distributed materials and spoke from pulpits, culminating with Cardinal Francis George writing a letter to V&V Supremo owners asking them to treat the workers fairly. "We wouldn't have been as welcome in the community without Luis Gutierrez's help," says Stiede. "And reaching out to the community energized us as an organization."

FOUR

SOARING IN THE SOUTH

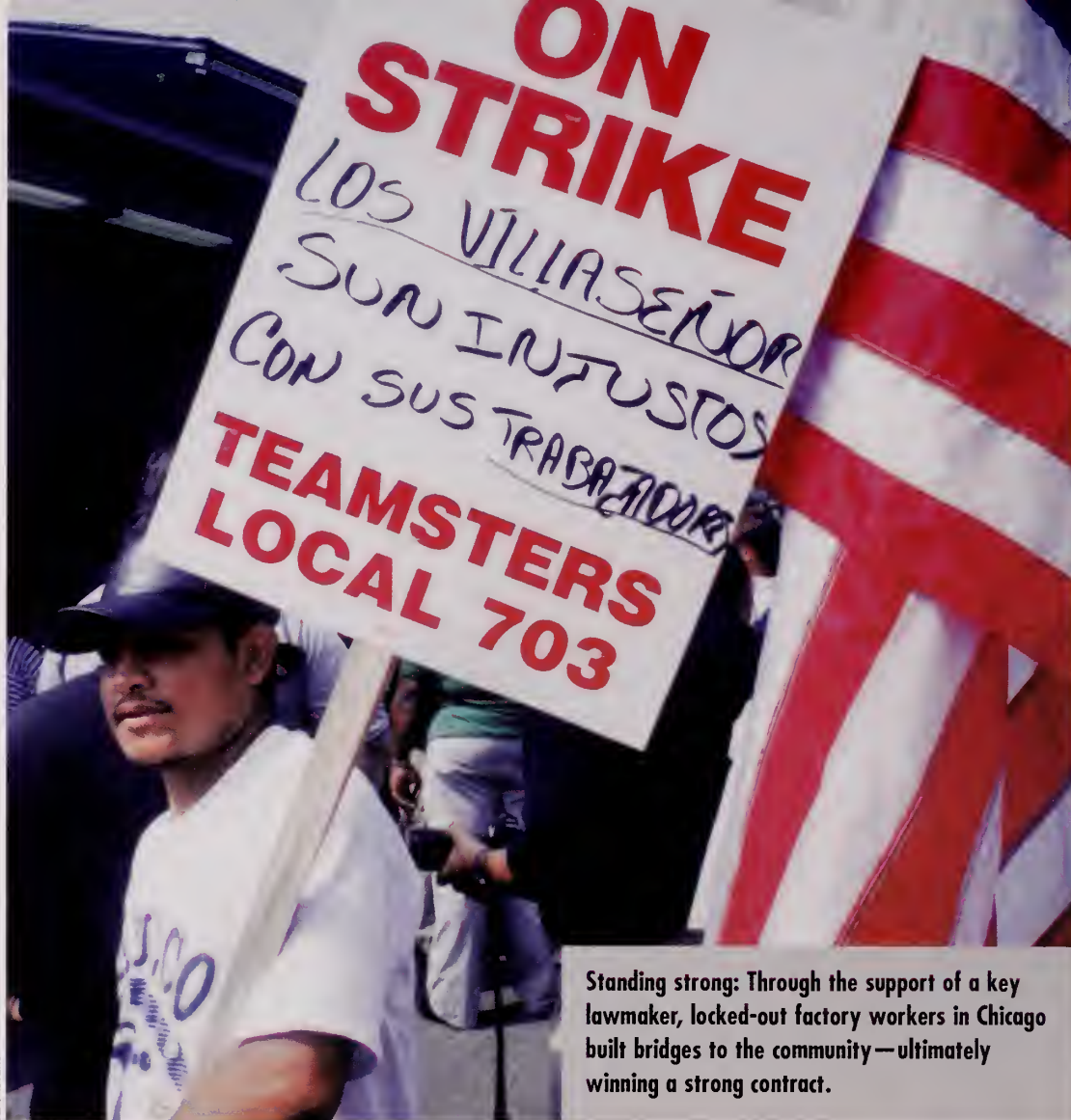
Public employees in the South face long odds when trying to get a voice on the job. And the 800 city workers in Savannah, Ga., who won a union with SEIU Local 1985 in 2001, pierced a tough barrier. Georgia state law prohibits collective bargaining, but union activists won a change in local policy by involving elected officials.

Local 1985's two-year campaign involving other unions, community groups and religious leaders culminated in a win for city workers. In March 2001, the city council voted to allow city workers to meet and confer with managers and gave workers the option of asking that union dues be deducted from their paychecks. One ally in the 7-2 vote was Alderman Tony Thomas, who bucked his political base and stood with the workers.

"Tony Thomas believes in the rights of workers to organize," says Ralph Williams, Local 1985 executive director. Thomas attended prayer vigils with workers, offered advice on approaching other aldermen and spoke out forcefully during council meetings. "It was really courageous of him," says Williams.

Standing with workers also brings elected officials certain political benefits, Williams says. "We built community and religious coalitions, which helped us influence elected officials," he says, noting some ministers lead churches with hundreds of members—and a 75 percent voter registration rate. Elected officials "see city workers as people with important alliances."

The union built on its victory in Savannah with a similar win for 400 Macon, Ga., city workers in April 2001 and has launched a new organizing campaign among 80,000 state workers. The campaign also aims to lay the groundwork to legalize collective bargaining through an executive order or passage of state legislation. "It could mean thousands of new members and more power for public workers in the South," says Williams.



Standing strong: Through the support of a key lawmaker, locked-out factory workers in Chicago built bridges to the community—ultimately winning a strong contract.



A winning coalition: The backing of community and religious groups enabled public-sector workers in Savannah, Ga., to gain the support of lawmakers in their efforts to win a voice at work.

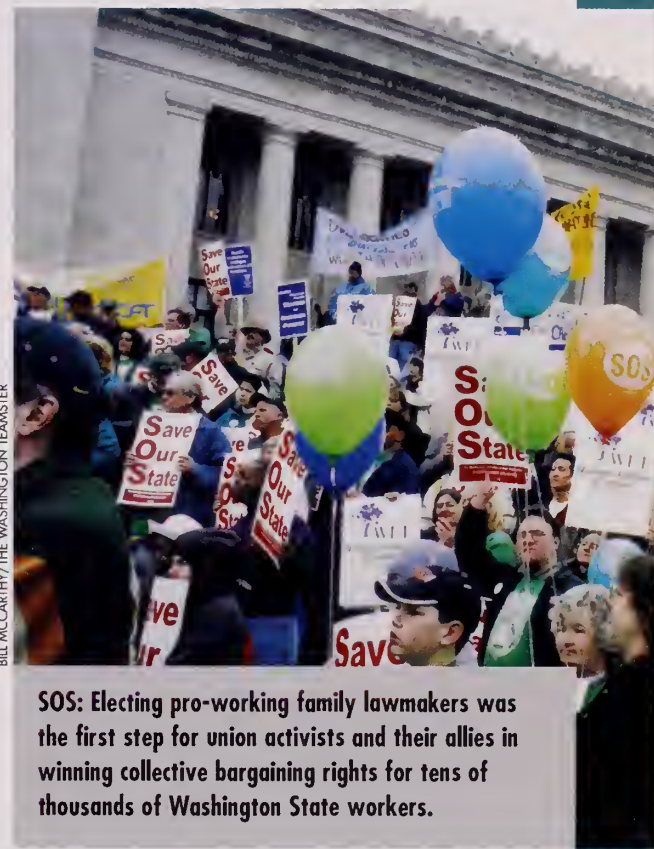
POLITICS TO ORGANIZING IN WASHINGTON STATE

For three years, the Washington State statehouse was strangled by a 49 to 49 partisan tie, and union activists couldn't move any pro-worker legislation. Then two legislators—one from each party—stepped down, triggering a special election in November 2001. In one district, it was clear a pro-worker candidate would win, but it was an uphill climb in the other. Union leaders in the Evergreen State seized the opportunity.

"I knew if we could get that district, that would change the balance of power in Olympia and then we could get some things done," says Roy Wilkinson, a member of Machinists District Lodge 751-Local E. For three months, hundreds of union members like Wilkinson knocked on voters' doors and made phone calls. Leaders of the Washington State Labor Council worked closely with the Snohomish County Labor Council, where the contested Everett district was centered. The worker-backed candidate won by 12 points and broke the statehouse tie.

Five months after their political victory, union activists celebrated a landmark legislative success. In March, the governor signed bills passed by a closely divided legislature giving state employees full collective bargaining rights and extending similar rights to four-year college faculty and to 3,700 graduate employees at the University of Washington who organized with the UAW last year—and who couldn't achieve final victory until the state law passed, formally allowing them to form a union.

Some 60,000 public employees could form unions and gain a voice at work within a year thanks to the legislation, estimates Rick Bender, president of the state federation, which spearheaded the political and legislative campaigns. "Those workers will no longer be collectively begging," he says. Similar victories in Maryland and Missouri have helped 6,700 workers win a real voice on the job. "Now we'll have the same rights millions of workers in the United States have," says Katie Nelson, an AFSCME



SOS: Electing pro-working family lawmakers was the first step for union activists and their allies in winning collective bargaining rights for tens of thousands of Washington State workers.

WINNING A VOICE AT WORK MEANS POLITICAL ACTION FOR HOME CARE WORKERS

Struggling with low pay and no voice in shaping the policies that affect them, home care workers in Washington State joined with people with disabilities and seniors to pass a ballot measure last fall improving the quality of home care. "We, as much as the union members, want conditions for them to improve," says Katrinka Gentile, chair of Americans Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT). Like similar winning efforts in Oregon and California, Initiative 775—which passed with 63 percent of the vote—creates a consumer board to be the "employer of record" for home care workers, who had been unfairly classified as independent contractors and earned less than \$8 an hour. The new law enabled home care workers to form a union—and on April 2, they filed for an election to join SEIU Local 6.

Union leaders are combining political, legislative and organizing strategies that already are yielding victories for the state's nearly 26,000 home care workers. This spring, thousands of workers rallied and lobbied at the state capitol to prevent cuts to the home care budget. When Local 6 activists visit workers, they deliver a crash course in state politics and ask workers to sign a union card—and also postcards to their representatives at the state capitol addressing pressing issues. Sometimes the workers' family members and clients join in. In a further melding of political and organizing strategies, Local 6 plans to deploy organizing teams based on the boundaries of state legislative districts and form local community coalitions to work on issues of mutual concern, such as living wage initiatives.

member who collects child support payments at the state's Department of Social and Health Services. Because the new law allows state workers to bargain for wages and benefits (in addition to the non-economic issues they had the right to negotiate before), "We can pull state employees up so that they are no longer eligible for the public assistance benefits they give out," Nelson says.

Winning the 2002 legislative campaign is helping Washington State union activists build for the future. Leaders are planning to run worker-to-worker, get-out-the-vote drives in 14 state legislative districts during this fall's election season, when activists also may have to fend off a business-sponsored ballot initiative to reverse the collective bargaining laws. When more workers join unions, the victories will spiral, Bender predicts. "As there is more organizing going on that will build our strength and help us pass even more progressive legislation," he says. @

A 2002 AFL-CIO survey finds health care, retirement and equal pay and opportunity are working women's top concerns

BY JAMES B. PARKS

As a medical records specialist for the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Celine Davis sees the impact of high health care costs every day: "The country has an obligation to provide at least base-level medical care for everyone," Davis says, but notes the nation's medical benefits system is cutting out low-wage workers.

Nearing retirement, Davis, 58, a member of AFSCME Local 328, is not concerned about her own medical coverage because she says she has "excellent" benefits through her union—but she worries about other workers who face the high costs of prescription medication and medical care. "Prescription drug costs are going through the roof and a lot of that money is going to marketing and advertising. We all need to come together—management, workers and government—to make sure everyone has coverage."

Working women across the nation share Davis's concern about quality, affordable health care—and worry as well about retirement security and equal pay and opportunity, according to the AFL-CIO's *Ask a Working Woman Survey 2002* report. Released in May, the survey is the third in a series designed to examine the pressures faced by working women and the solutions they seek in their workplaces and through legislation. The first two surveys in 1997 and 2000 helped form the basis of the federation's working families legislative agenda. For the first time, the 2002 survey includes a look at the priorities of working men.

Lake Snell Perry & Associates conducted the telephone survey of 1,250 women 18 and older nationwide who work outside the home and among 350 men age 18 and older. The Lake survey was part of a year-long national effort that included a field survey of 20,000 working women.

Ask a CONCERN ABOUT

health care has surged since the 2000 survey, with nine in 10 women rating affordable health care an "important" legislative priority and 69 percent of women saying it is "very important"—an increase of 12 percentage points since 2000.

Although women's concerns about health care top equal pay in this year's survey, working women still are passionate about equal pay. The percentage of women who say better pay is very important increased by 7 points from 2000.

Working women also worry about pension benefits and Social Security, with 90 percent of women calling the issue important and 64 percent saying it is very important—a 9 point increase since 2000.

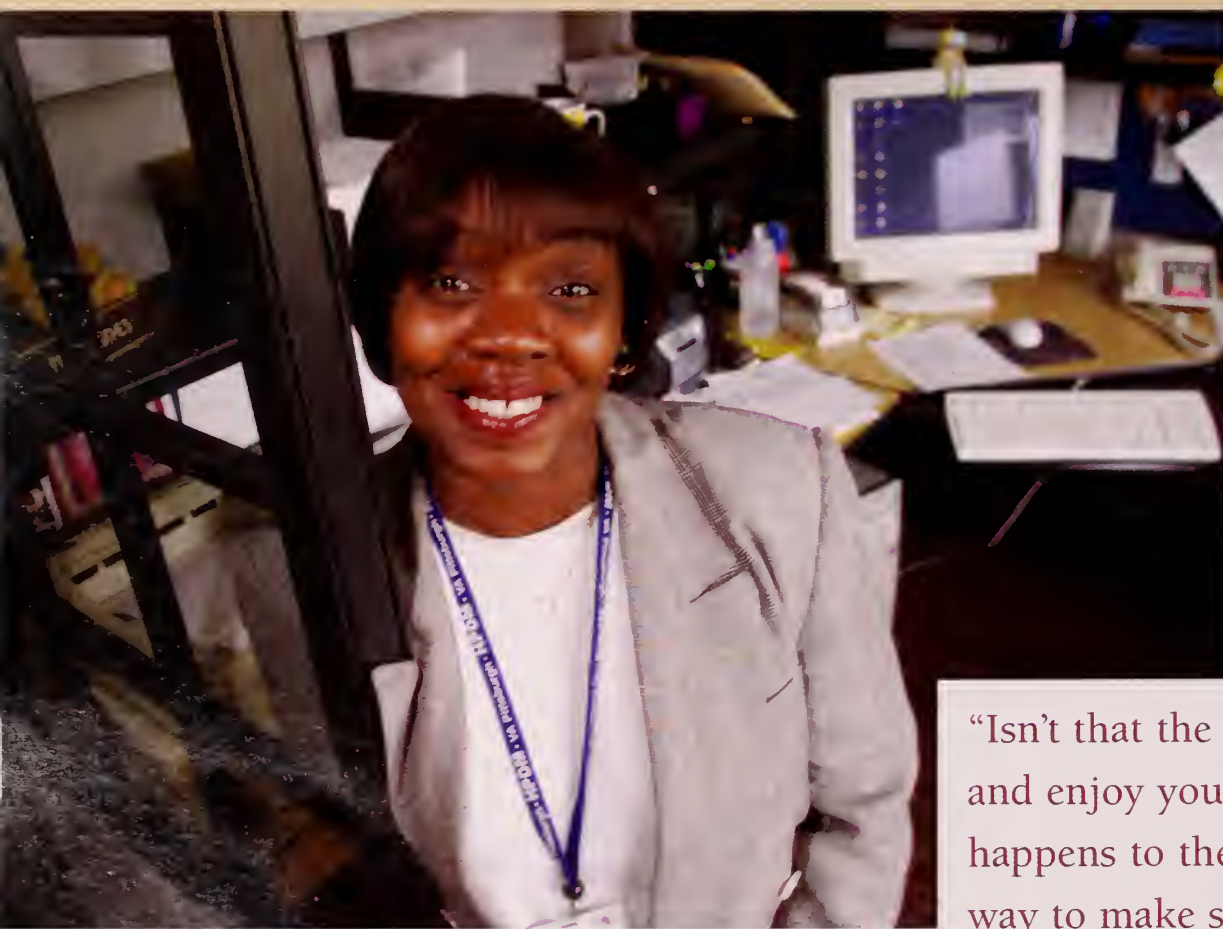
The Bush administration is pushing a plan to privatize portions of the Social Security system, putting the future of the nation's retirees in the hands of Wall Street (see story, page 12). But Nancy James, 54, who took part in the field survey, doesn't buy it. "The government needs to save Social Security and we need something to give us faith that these companies, where we have our 401(k)s, are going to still be there when we retire," says James, a Northwest Airlines ticket counter agent in Raleigh, N.C., and a Machinists member. "Look at the poor people at Enron. They thought they were doing the right thing. It's really scary."

Alfreda Hughes, another field survey respondent, worries that when she retires, there will be no money for her to live on.

"Isn't that the American way—to work hard and enjoy your retirement? No matter what happens to the economy, we ought to find a way to make sure Social Security survives."

—Alfreda Hughes,

Veterans Affairs program support assistant, AFGE Local 3344

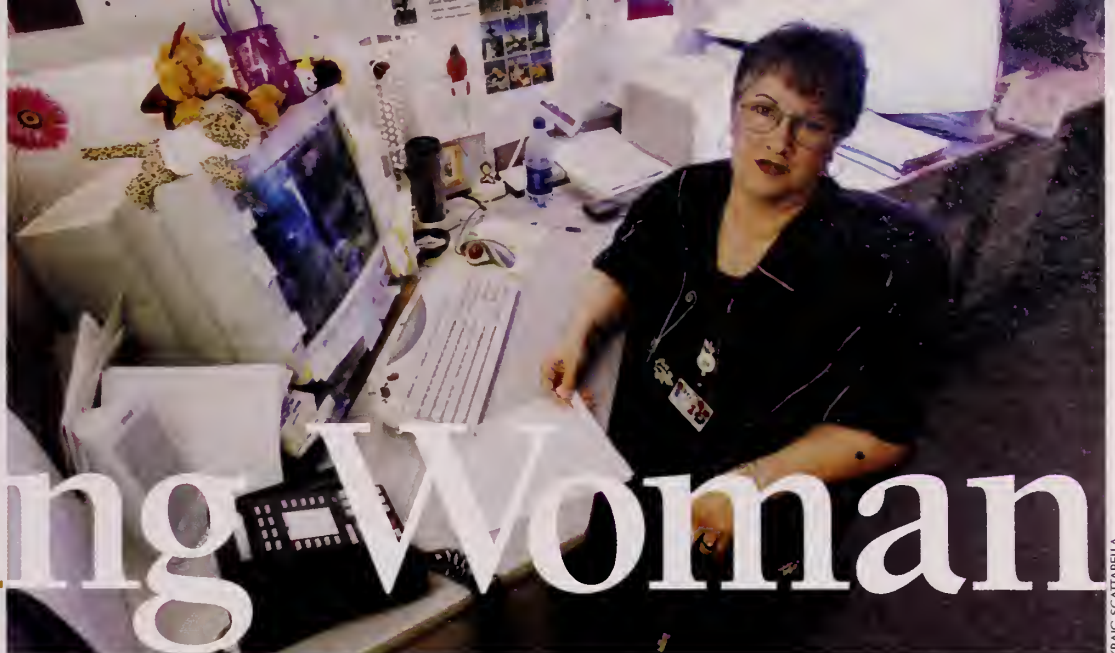


JASON COHEN

"The country has an obligation to provide at least base-level medical care for everyone."

—Celine Davis,
medical records specialist,
AFSCME Local 328

Working Woman



"I believe with all my heart that if you do all this work, there should be something there when you retire," says Hughes, 43, a program support assistant for Veterans Affairs in Pittsburgh. "Isn't that the American way—to work hard and enjoy your retirement?"

Hughes, a member of AFGE Local 3344 and mother of a 14-year-old daughter, says it's important for Social Security to be strong when she retires. "No matter what happens to the economy, we ought to find a way to make sure Social Security survives."

Working mothers work longer hours

The *Ask a Working Woman Survey 2002* finds that a majority of working mothers work long hours. Two of three working mothers—66 percent—say they work 40 hours or more per week, compared with 60 percent of women without children.

Many women, especially women of color, do not work in traditional 9-to-5 jobs. While nearly a third of all women say they work nontraditional hours, including weekends and nights, 45 percent of African American women and 44 percent of Latinas work irregular hours.

While 40 percent of working mothers work different schedules than their husbands or partners, the work schedules of 52 percent of African American women and 47 percent of Latinas differ from those of their spouses or partners.

Working men and women share the same concerns

According to the survey working men and women share concerns and priorities. Nine of 10 women put affordable health care—91 percent—and strengthening pensions and Social Security—90 percent—at the top of their legislative priorities. Men were equally concerned about these issues with 92 per-

cent rating each as an important priority.

Men and women also agree on the need for laws that guarantee women equal pay for performing the same jobs as men. In 2000, the average woman worker was paid 73 cents for every dollar a man was paid. Ninety-two percent of women surveyed say laws to strengthen equal pay are important and 58 percent say they are very important. Men believe about as strongly in the need for equal pay: Eighty-six percent consider it important and 53 percent rate it as very important.

Women also place a high value on affirmative action to increase opportunities for women. Ninety percent of women say stronger affirmative action laws to provide more opportunities for women are an important legislative priority. Some 59 percent say affirmative action is very important, a 6 point increase from 2000. The assault on affirmative action by the Republicans in Congress has created an atmosphere that is allowing discrimination against people of color and women to creep back into the workplace, Hughes says.

A strong majority of men—80 percent—agree affirmative action for women is important, with 51 percent saying it is very impor-

tant and women of all races support stronger affirmative action laws. Working men share women's concerns about caregiving for the family, with 85 percent saying expanding family and medical leave is an important legislative issue and 76 percent supporting laws to ensure quality, affordable child care.

Supporting the right to join a union

Women's concerns for better health care, retirement security and safety can best be addressed through unions, Hughes says. She is among the two-thirds of working women—66 percent—and 63 percent of working men who support the right to join a union without the employer's interference. Latinas expressed the strongest support for the freedom to form a union at 72 percent, along with 40- to 49-year-olds from all groups (72 percent) and white women with children (71 percent).

"We have to make our unions stronger," Hughes says, "so we can work together for a better life for all of us."

For copies of the report, visit www.aflcio.org/women or call the AFL-CIO Civil, Human and Women's Rights Department at 202-637-5270. @

Key findings of the AFL-CIO's Ask a Working Woman Survey 2002 include:

- Six in 10 women work 40 or more hours per week. The figure is higher for working mothers—68 percent—compared with 60 percent for women without children. Three in 10 women—30 percent—work nontraditional shifts, including weekends and evenings. Among working mothers, 40 percent work different schedules than their spouses or partners.
- Health care is a rising priority for working women, with a 12 percentage point increase in the number of women who consider health care a top legislative priority.
- There are few differences in the issue priorities of working parents and workers without children. Working parents place a slightly higher priority on pay raises and promotions, child care and a safe work environment than working women without children. Among working men, fathers are slightly less concerned about respect on the job and place a higher priority on child care than men without children.
- A two-thirds majority supports the freedom to join a union without employer interference.

'TAKE THE MONEY and Run'



Kmart is closing 284 stores and laying off 22,000 workers without severance pay—and yet in 2001, Kmart Chief Executive Officer Chuck Conaway walked away with a golden parachute worth at least \$9.5 million—on top of total 2000 compensation that topped \$29 million.

Kmart is not an isolated example. While a typical company's corporate

profits declined by 35 percent in 2001, corporate chiefs pocketed 7 percent more in median salaries than the previous year. At the same time, CEOs have risk-proofed their own retirement and job security, while workers are more vulnerable than ever.

"Take the Money and Run" is a fun way to see if you can match what

CEOs did to their companies and workers (left column, below) with the payoffs they got for their work (below, right column). To play "Take the Money and Run" online and for more information on CEO pay and how you can get involved in campaigns to curb CEO compensation, visit www.aflcio.org/paywatch.



What the CEO Did

- A.** GE has not contributed to its workers' pension plan since 1987—and the plan added \$1.5 billion back to GE's earnings in 2001.
- B.** Coca-Cola cut 5,200 jobs and the value of Coke workers' 401(k) plan has fallen in half.
- C.** By the end of 2002, if it spins off its recently acquired cable business, AT&T is expected to employ 75 percent fewer workers than it did in 1984.
- D.** Tyco International has eliminated 11,000 jobs as it closed or consolidated more than 300 plants.
- E.** Hewlett-Packard will cut 15,000 jobs as the result of its merger with Compaq.

What the CEO Got

- ?** In addition to 2001 compensation of \$16,246,772, former CEO John Welch Jr. stands to receive a pension benefit of nearly \$10 million every year for the rest of his life.
- ?** CEO Dennis Kozlowski and his chief financial officer have cashed out half-a-billion dollars in shares and stock options—on top of salaries and bonuses totaling almost \$22 million over the past three years.
- ?** CEO Douglas Daft got the earnings targets on his restricted stock grant reduced after he failed to meet his promised performance goals. His total 2001 compensation was \$105,186,544.
- ?** CEO C. Michael Armstrong will get a new employment contract and has a \$10 million floor on his restricted stock. His 2000 compensation totaled \$27,730,943.
- ?** CEO Carly Fiorina took home nearly \$15 million in 2001 compensation and gets a new employment contract.



ANSWERS

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LIKE IT IS

Unions Educate Around HIV/AIDS

As the rate of HIV/AIDS virus infection soars across the globe—increasingly among heterosexuals, women and people of color—the union movement is responding with strategies aimed at education, prevention and financing for treatments.

“This disease is a major killer in this country and around the world,” says Coalition of Labor Union Women President Gloria Johnson. “It’s hitting everybody everywhere. It’s so frightening and so destructive.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 793,026 people in the United States had HIV/AIDS as of June 2001, including 8,994 children under age 13. The percentage of whites and blacks was about even—43 percent and 40 percent respectively, while Latinos accounted for 19 percent. Worldwide, the number of those who contract the HIV/AIDS virus is growing at a rate of about 5 million annually. At the end of last year, 40 million worldwide—25 million in Africa alone—were infected, according to the World Health Organization.

Although many unions include materials on HIV/AIDS as part of their overall health and safety education programs, union activists say more awareness and workplace education are needed.

CLUW, which received a \$250,000 grant from the CDC in 2000, is taking a leading role in increasing awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS in U.S. workplaces and communities. CLUW has formed a leadership forum of AFL-CIO unions and constituency groups to promote increased funding for HIV/AIDS research and treatment, provide workplace education on how the disease is transmitted and help unions negotiate contract language that protects the rights of members who have the virus.

The union movement is in a unique position to provide leadership on HIV/AIDS education, says Karen McMillan, director of CLUW’s HIV/AIDS project. It is important to educate union families about the disease and how it is transmitted, she says, and the workplace is a venue in which unions can provide a continuum of care—from increasing awareness, education and prevention to care, support and treatment. CLUW is developing videos and other educational materials for use in the workplace.

Globally, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity has joined with trade unions, businesses and the government in South Africa to establish worksite-based education and counseling about HIV/AIDS for workers. The center funds training for shop stewards to provide peer counseling to fellow workers and assist those infected with HIV/AIDS in getting treatment.

Communications Workers of America President Morton Bahr says he plans to use his positions as chairman of the Board of United Way International and chair of the AFL-CIO Executive Council’s International Affairs Committee to involve the work and

resources of the international union movement to strengthen HIV/AIDS operations worldwide.

“A key goal will be to coordinate the work of United Way International and United Nations agencies so we can address the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa and to make more progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to promote AIDS education,” Bahr says.

Unions like AFT and AFSCME are tackling the issue globally. Since June 2001, AFT has partnered with teachers’ unions in three African countries through its AFT-Africa AIDS campaign to train African teachers—who have a 35 percent HIV/AIDS infection rate—to reduce the incidence of HIV infection and to empower

African teacher organizations to become active in pressuring their governments to devote more resources to fighting HIV/AIDS.

AFSCME has donated \$50,000 to the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa to help promote AIDS education, mainly for young people, by funding theater groups and other media that appeal to children. The foundation, founded by Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison for fighting apartheid and who served as president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999, is designed to expand democracy, education and health care in that country. Trade union programs and funding are critical in fighting HIV/AIDS, says AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy, who is vice chairman of the council’s International Affairs Committee,

because the disease affects workplaces, communities and families.

“The trade unions are in the workplaces and have the structures to provide the education and information about HIV/AIDS to workers. So we have a special obligation to do what we can to help our brothers and sisters and their families fight this terrible disease,” he says.

The AFL-CIO also is involved in fighting the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic through the International AIDS Trust, an HIV/AIDS advocacy group. On May 8, the IAT announced a partnership with UNAIDS, the United Nations’ agency established to fight the disease.

“The AFL-CIO stands ready to assist this partnership to eradicate the disease and bring hope to working families and their children throughout the world,” says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

For more information on how your union can help fight HIV/AIDS, call the AFL-CIO Safety and Health Department at 202-637-5366; visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Labor Responds to AIDS website at www.brta-lrta.org or call 800-342-2437; and contact Karen McMillan of the Coalition of Labor Union Women’s HIV/AIDS project at 202-223-8360, ext. 7 or Robert Lovelace at the American Center for International Labor Solidarity at 202-778-4500. For more resources, click on www.aflcio.org/healthcare/justforyou.htm#hiv.

—James B. Parks



TOP IT ANTHEMS

No new chart this week — we've been busy. But there are more great tunes coming soon.



KPMG

"Our vision of global strategy." The classic hit that launched It Anthems, still evergreen! Finally KPMG's effort and fun — and your votes — have put it at the top spot. How many KPMGers voted, we wonder?

LAST WEEK POSITION: 2 NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS: 14,800



McKinsey & Company "McKC"

Still riding high on downloads, but pipped in the poll by the unstoppable KPMG. Thanks to help from Anthems fans, McKC's lyrics nearly make sense now. We still think they worship C though!

LAST WEEK POSITION: 1 NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS: 20,000



IBM

"Ever onward." Piped at number three, IBM supporters release their secret weapon this week — a killer Flash animation by Tim Flaherty that takes pop videos to a whole new level. If this doesn't push Big Blue ever onward to the top, I will eat a deck of punchcards!

LAST WEEK POSITION: 3 NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS: 20,000



Ericsson "Network intelligence"

Still holding (geddit?) at number four Ericsson's network intelligence. Recently opposed to the telecom engineers out there in popland. This

WHAT IS IT

The chart is a list of the most downloaded songs on the web. It's not a chart of the most popular songs, but it's a chart of the most downloaded songs.

MAINTAINED BY ZDNET

More info: www.zdnet.co.uk/specials/2002/it-anthems

CHART

Web: www.zdnet.co.uk/specials/2002/it-anthems

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0 Say Can You Pay Homage to Big Business?

As corporate profits nosedived by 35 percent and stock prices fell by 13 percent last year, chief executive officers pocketed 7 percent more in median wages. So it's no wonder corporate giants are coming up with anthems to literally sing a company's praises and build team spirit.

Now, even those outside the corporate walls can access Big Business tunes through a new website that enables visitors to

hear corporate anthems—and even sing along (the webmaster transcribes many of the lyrics). The site (www.zdnet.co.uk/specials/2002/it-anthems) also helpfully lists a weekly Top 20 list.

Recent chart busters have included McKinsey & Company's "McKC," with lyrics sung to a catchy Reggae beat: "Challenges, engages, nothing really phases us/Come hell or high water, you can always count on us." KPMG's anthem, "Our Vision of Global Strategy," includes such rousing lyrics as "A global team, this is our dream of success that we create/Together each of us will run for gold/That shines like the sun in our eyes."

Why worry about Enronization when it's only a click away to such tunes as IBM's light-hearted "Ever Onward" and PricewaterhouseCoopers' swinging "Downright Global"? @



Hittin' the Highway

As part of the Machinists' new campaign to help more than 5,000 auto technicians in 70 Las Vegas-area parts shops get a voice at work, organizers have come up with a mobile billboard that tells employers to "torque off."

"The response has been great," says Automotive Department Coordinator Boysen Anderson. Representatives of 17 shops showed up at IAM's first meeting to talk with auto technicians about forming their own union. The only negative response to the billboards has been from employers: "Management doesn't like it," says Anderson. "But they don't like the union being there, period." @

Ticket to Ride

Maryland commuters did a double take earlier this year when they saw "parking tickets" on their windshields. Instead of targeting drivers, the red-and-white "Parking Fee Violation Notice" cited the University of Maryland, College Park for violations of "employees' right to a voice at work" and failure to negotiate with staff, members of AFSCME Local 312.

Union activists issued the "tickets"—petitions staff and students could sign and return to the university—after campus officials sought to bypass the collective bargaining process and boost parking permit fees by about 50 percent for students, faculty and staff. The increased parking fees hit staff and faculty the hardest, with fees slated to rise from \$220 to \$330 for the academic year.

"I'm hoping the university realizes that the employees—staff and students—all should have a say in the issues concerning us," accounting associate Karla Fahey told *The Diamondback*, the student paper. "They shouldn't dictate our policies."

Designed to look like a University of Maryland-issued parking ticket, the petitions were so popular, 2,200 were signed and sent to the administration in two weeks. @

Social Security Hatchet Job

When President George W. Bush showed up for Earth Day in April with a hatchet in hand, comedian David Letterman cut to the point in his CBS show.

"Yesterday, of course, was Earth Day, and President Bush was up in the Adirondack Mountains talking about Earth Day. And he was showing people how to use an ax. As a matter of fact, it's the same ax that he's going to use on Social Security, so it comes in handy." @

Parking Fee Violation Notice

Violator: **University of Maryland College Park**

Date: 2002-2004
Location: Department of Campus Parking
Violation of: (check appropriate box)
☐ Respect for campus community
☐ Employees right to a voice at work
☐ Requirement to negotiate with staff
☐ Loyalty of staff and students

PUBLICATIONS



Global Backlash: Citizen Initiatives for a Just World Economy, edited by Robin Broad, brings together dozens of documents from a wide spectrum of viewpoints about the movement to stop domination of the global economy by multinational corporations. The articles,

speeches and government reports originate from a range of contributors, including United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's address to the World Trade Organization ministers, the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade's position on fair and sustainable trade in North America and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney's statements on the new internationalism. \$35 paperback, \$85 cloth. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 800-462-6420.

The CyberUnion Handbook: Transforming Labor Through Computer Technology, edited by Arthur B. Shostak, offers a wealth of practical, nuts-and-bolts information on implementing technology to help the union movement grow. It examines what has and hasn't worked in efforts to build "cyberunions"—unions that take advantage of technology to become stronger and more effective. Authored by union movement experts, the book offers strategies gleaned from nonprofit organizations on effective Internet use, includes guides for using e-mail systems and creating websites and provides tips on "avoiding shams, scams and spam" when working on the information superhighway." \$25.95 paperback, \$64.95 cloth. M.E. Sharpe, 800-541-6563.

A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the **Kids Count Data Book** provides statistics on 10 measures of child well-being, including the teen birth rate, the percentage of children living with parents who don't have family-supporting wages and the percentage of children living in poverty. The *Data Book*, which is issued annually, breaks down the statistics by state. The 2002 edition can be viewed online at



EXHIBIT

The **Lower East Side Tenement Museum** in New York City recently recreated its newest, permanent tenement apartment on the site that was the home and garment sweatshop of the Jenny and Harris Levine family a century ago. The Levines, who immigrated from Poland, moved into 97 Orchard St. (now the museum site) in the early 1890s. Visitors hear stories told by workers who work in the garment industry today. The museum is open for tours Tuesday through Friday, 1 p.m.–4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Reservations are recommended but not required. For reservations, call 800-965-4827 or go to www.ticketweb.com.



BENJAMIN TRIMMER

www.kidscount.org. A free copy is available by calling the foundation at 410-223-2890, faxing your request to 410-547-6624 or ordering online at www.aecf.org/publications.

IN THE GARDEN



Gardeners who want the union label on their flowers now have a fragrant option. Farm Workers members have teamed up with California flower grower Bear Creek

Corp. to develop a rose dedicated to the memory of UFW founder César Chávez. Ten percent of the proceeds from the sale of the lustrous red rose go to the César A. Chávez Foundation, which educates young people about the union leader's legacy. To order, call 800-292-4769 or visit www.jacksonandperkins.com.

EDUCATION

Summer Schools for Union Women

Join women from your region for several days of training and networking at the 2002 Summer Schools for Union Women in July. Women from a variety of unions and backgrounds develop organizing and leadership

BUY BOOKS AND SUPPORT UNION BUSINESS

When purchasing publications, don't forget to check online first with Powell's Bookstore, the nation's largest unionized bookstore, where employees are members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 5. Go to www.powellunion.com and click on "Books." This transfers you to the Powells.com website—and 10 percent of the purchase price goes to a workers' profit-sharing plan.

skills—while being inspired and energized for their work in the union movement. For more information, contact Lynn Duggan (Midwest) at 812-855-9082; Nancy Johnson (South) at 859-257-2976; Bonnie Ladin (Northeast) at 301-431-5409; or Katie Quan (West) at 510-643-7213.

WEBSIGHTING

www.fieldsofhope.org: Geared toward children and adults, a new website sponsored by the American Center for International Labor Solidarity highlights issues surrounding child labor in agriculture. The site points out that at least 250 million children ages 5 to 14 work worldwide, most in agriculture. Union activists, teachers, students and others interested in child labor issues can access resources and Web links and more.



CAMPAIGN

Join the **Justice for Garment Workers Campaign**. If your clothes are labeled Gap, Banana Republic, Old Navy or Baby-Gap, chances are they were produced by workers who sew clothes in sweatshop conditions for Gap Inc. Take action to demand that Gap respects workers' rights and pays a living wage to those who make the clothes it sells. Log on to the UNITE-sponsored Behind the Label website at www.behindthelabel.org and click on "Global Justice for Garment Workers Campaign—Join Now." You'll find sample materials for a local action targeting Gap and profiles of Gap workers in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. @

A Voice@Work



BCTD

A Way of Justice

Throughout June, workers organizing unions are reaching out to their communities, explaining why they want a voice at work and shining a light on employers who rob them of the freedom to make their own decisions about a union.

By involving community groups, elected officials and religious leaders in workers' struggles, today's unions are reducing employer interference and laying the groundwork for fundamental reform of America's labor laws in the future.

To get a glimpse of June Voice@Work actions, visit www.aflcio.org.



DON IPOCK

A Way of Community



LEN KAMINSKY

A Way of Life



JANA BIRCHUM/IMPACT VISUALS

A Way of Family

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

JULY 2002

America @work

Save
services
Support
families

one million VOICES
one million VOTES

DON'T FIX
THE BUDGET
BY TARGETING
WORKING FAMILIES

STATE ACTION

ALSO INSIDE:

Talkin' 'Bout
My Generation

Nuts and Bolts
Political Action

Outing ALEC

Oregon New Alliance

ending occupy:

Union activists are advancing
a working families agenda
state by state

"HOW COULD I volunteer my time to address [corporate greed]? It is obscene how much CEOs make. I just learned that Lawrence Ellison of Oracle made over \$700,000,000 last year! The main reason that the stock market is down is executive greed. Did you know that many CEOs now get a percentage (for example, 6 percent) of corporate cash flow?"—*Timothy Bal, Montgomery, N.J.*

SAY WHAT?

How is your union getting young people involved in working family issues?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

About what your union is doing to address corporate accountability:

"The Laborers Union is educating its pension fund trustees on good corporate governance issues. This education has expanded to shareholder activism in the form of resolutions, lobbying efforts and more. The congressional push to close the corporate loophole of taking advantage of tax-free Bermudan headquarters is the result of demands from Laborers and other unions. The Central Laborers' Pension Fund currently has a resolution before shareholders of Nabors Drilling. The company's workforce voted to join a union, although they have yet to [bargain]. As shareholders in this and other companies, union pension funds have tremendous strength in holding corporations accountable. If corporations aren't willing to sit down at the union's negotiating table, the Laborers [union is] ready to walk...into the boardroom and take its seat and voting rights at their table."—*Laborers International Vice President Edward Smith, Laborers*

"I AM VERY fortunate to be an AFSCME member at an organization that promotes equal opportunity in hiring. This is not the case in many businesses. In Pennsylvania, it is legal to ask a woman her marital status [during a job interview] and whether she has children. This practice has been used to discriminate against single female parents in hiring decisions. House Bill 1718 was written to make it illegal to ask marital [and] familial status questions during a job interview. It will come for a vote to the House of Representatives in the near future. While it is illegal in [some states and the District of Columbia] to ask these questions, 33 states still legally permit this practice. Check with your local Human Relations Commission and find out the exact law in your state. If it is the same as in Pennsylvania, find out how to get it changed. It's up to us to make things right."—*Kiki Peppard, Effort, Pa.*

"...I HAVE BEEN a registered nurse since 1986 [and] I have always worked as a per-diem nurse so I could have more control over my schedule. I started in 1987 earning \$28 an hour and today I earn \$29 an hour. I am in the very early stages...of starting a union at our hospital. The reasons I feel we as nurses would benefit is to give us a stronger voice about patient care and staffing...to provide a safe environment for the patients and the nurses...[The administration is] not concerned for the patients' safety or our safety. I was very sorry to hear Monsignor Higgins passed away. I sure could use his prayers and help getting the nurses at my hospital organized."—*Name and city withheld upon request because of fear of employer retaliation, California*

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.

America@work

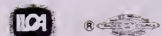
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Capt. Duane Woerth • Stephen P. Yokich • Boyd D. Young

CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

Union support helps laid-off Enron workers win \$34 million

Laundry workers clean up with UNITE

Launching Voice@Work month

22 OUT THERE

The 'in' thing

It's pretty, but will it cover my retirement?

23 HOMEPAGE

Publications: *Illinois Fire Fighters Build a Union, 1901-1985*

Taking the High Road: Communities Organize for Economic Change

Convention: "Un Encuentro Sindical," the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement

Videos: "Everyday Heroes," documenting the aftermath of Sept. 11

"Occupation," documenting the three-week 2001 Harvard sit-in

Websightings: Support Wal-Mart workers seeking a voice at work; find out more about anti-sweatshop campaigns

8

TALKIN' 'BOUT MY GENERATION

Student activism—most recently reborn in the fight to end sweatshops—is expanding to include workers' rights issues on campus and beyond

12

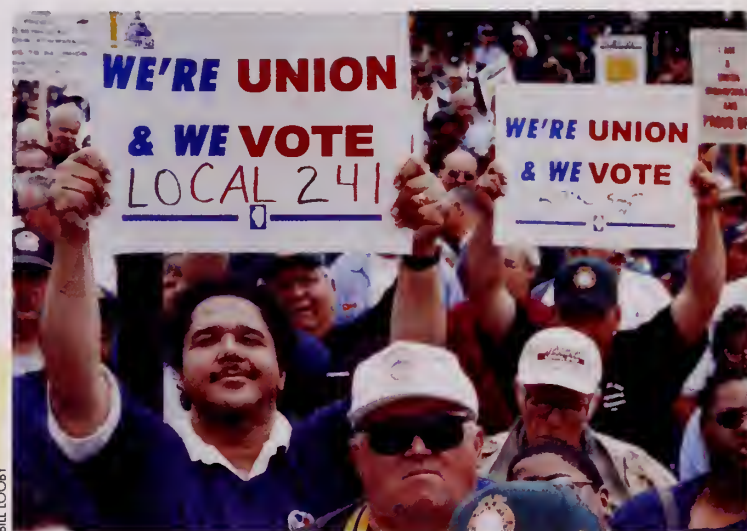
NUTS AND BOLTS POLITICAL ACTION

Union members and staff seeking to hone their political campaign management skills, refine their get-out-the-vote efforts or even run for public office are turning to the AFL-CIO Institute for Political Leadership to win their races and meet their goals

14

STATE ACTION

Union activists are advancing a working families agenda state by state



18

OUTING ALEC

Backed by the biggest names in Big Business, a little-known Washington, D.C.-based organization is trampling working families with an aggressive, state-by-state agenda

20

CRAFTING A NEW ALLIANCE IN OREGON

Union members across the state have created a powerful new structure to better coordinate organizing and political action



DAVID BACON



Victory: Meat packers at ConAgra waged a two-year campaign for a voice at work.

Meat Packers Win with Community Support

Tired of abusive supervisors, a lack of safety equipment and speedups on their assembly line, 440 ConAgra workers in Omaha, Neb., won a voice on the job with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271 in a May 3 election, further building workers' strength in the meat packing industry.

Two years ago, UFCW launched an organizing program with Omaha Together/One Community. During the campaign at ConAgra, congregations held special religious services for workers, praying for their courage throughout the struggle. Union members from across Nebraska and Iowa drove miles to attend rallies, as did workers from recently unionized meat packing plants in Omaha.

"We felt a lot of support from the community," says Juan Valadez, a 20-year ConAgra veteran. "Having OTOC and the community on our side helped us stay strong and win."

Nearly 1,000 Omaha meat packing workers now have a voice with UFCW since the launch of the union-community campaign. The ConAgra production and maintenance workers are joined by Armour Swift Eckrich plant workers in Omaha who joined the UFCW last year.

In August 2001, Nebraska Beef workers lost their bid for a union in an election that subsequently was overturned by the regional National Labor Relations Board office based on findings that the company engaged in illegal actions during the campaign—such as intimidating workers by scrawling "vote no" in animal blood on the wall the day of the union election. Nebraska Beef now is engaging in delay tactics by appealing the order for a new election, says Local 271 President Donna McDonald, but the workers at Nebraska Beef and other meat packing firms continue to build support for a voice at work at their plants. @

Rx Express on a Roll

Bernice Strange pays \$1,000 a year for supplemental insurance to cover part of her prescription drug costs. But the Philadelphia grandmother also pays between \$550 and \$650 a month for prescription drugs.

"I don't want to be a poor old woman. I want to go to a movie with my granddaughter and be able to afford to buy her a box of popcorn. We need a Medicare prescription drug plan," she says.

With prescription drug costs soaring, Strange, a member of the Alliance of Retired Americans, joined with hundreds of seniors from 13 states along the U.S.-Canada border who boarded buses to Canada in May and June as part of the Alliance's Rx Express. In Canada they bought prescription drugs that cost a fraction of what they sell for in the United States—saving more than \$500,000 in medication costs, according to the Alliance.

Several members of Congress and other lawmakers joined the seniors and expressed support for a national prescription drug



JIM WEST

Affordable: Participants in the Alliance for Retired Americans' Rx Express, such as these seniors in Detroit, saved more than \$500,000 in prescription drug costs by traveling to Canada.

benefit. According to the Alliance, seniors account for 13 percent of the U.S. population but pay more than one-third of expenditures for prescription drugs. Nearly one-third of older Americans—about 11 million—do not have prescription coverage in the course of a year.

The Alliance also is working to lower drug costs through legislation for all seniors whether or not they are Medicare beneficiaries.

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org. @

Diverse Workforce Stands United

The 435 African American, Latino, Vietnamese, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Jamaican, Bosnian and Russian workers at Mitsubishi/Caterpillar Forklift of America in Houston may have diverse backgrounds, but they share a common goal: a strong voice at work. In May, they came together to vote to join the Sheet Metal Workers in the face of a virulent anti-union campaign that included "nonstop daily doses of fear and intimidation and harassment for eight months," says SMWIA organizer Linda Morales. Management's lack of respect for the workers fueled their solidarity and allowed them to turn back attempts to pit ethnic groups against one another.

As the election day neared and the company saw the workers were standing strong with the union, management promised the workers if they voted against joining the union, they would be treated with respect—what Morales called a "give-us-another-chance plea." The plea was turned down and with many members of the Harris County Central Labor Council at the plant gates to show solidarity and support, the workers voted to join SMWIA. @

Industrial Unions Council Takes on Tough Issues

Although American manufacturing workers are the most productive in the world, 2.5 million

jobs—about 9 percent of all manufacturing jobs—were lost in the last third of the twentieth century. More than half of those jobs were lost last year, with another 166,000 disappearing in the first quarter of

this year, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

To restore America's industrial strength and retain its good jobs, the federation launched the Industrial Unions Council in May.

Some of the council's top goals include stopping the flood of trade and investment agreements that disadvantage manufacturing in the United States and ending tax policies that favor outsourcing to other countries.

"It is going to take the weight of the entire labor movement to push for an industrial policy in this country," says PACE International Union President Boyd Young. PACE is among the unions on the new council.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka will chair the council, which replaces the Executive Council's committee on manufacturing, and is composed of the presidents of the affiliated manufacturing unions. @

SEWING CLOTHES AND EARNING A LIVING WAGE

When TV talk show hostess Oprah Winfrey asked her studio audience whether they would pay an additional 50 cents for a T-shirt they knew wasn't made by workers laboring in sweatshop conditions, she was met with a hearty chorus of "Yes!" Winfrey posed the query on her May 23 show as her guest, Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's ice cream company, described the launch of SweatX, a clothing manufacturing company out to prove that garment

makers can treat workers fairly and turn a profit.

The 20 workers at the California SweatX plant earn a living wage, receive decent health and pension benefits and have a voice on the job with UNITE.

"I never expected to work at a company where I am treated with respect," says UNITE member Enriqueta Soto, a 20-year garment worker.

"With our union, we have the security of a signed contract."

SweatX, which opened in April, is marketing T-shirts and caps to union, religious and student groups nationwide. The company's leaders plan to develop a community education campaign to inform consumers about the sweatshop conditions under which clothes are manufactured. For more information, click on www.sweatx.net. @



Laundry Workers Clean Up With UNITE

With the backing of community allies and elected officials across the Southwest—and key support from co-workers at a sister facility—350 Mission Linen Supply

workers at three worksites in Arizona and New Mexico won a voice at work with UNITE during May elections.

Paving the way for the victories, Mission Linen workers in California—members of UNITE Local 75 for two years—negotiated a new contract in April. During the talks, the company agreed to an expedited union representation election for Mission Linen workers in Arizona and

New Mexico. The UNITE Local 75 workers—recognizing their own strength increases as more Mission Linen workers become union members—traveled to the two states to discuss the benefits of forming a union with the workers there.

Coordinated by UNITE and the AFL-CIO, elected officials joined the workers' campaign in each city, with Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez writing a letter of support to the workers and members of the Arizona legislature attending rallies and signing letters in support of the workers. Raul Grijalva, a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives and a former member of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, which includes Tucson, marched with the workers through the laundry's cafeteria and shop floor to the management's office, demanding the company meet with workers and community activists.

"We had the support of important people in the community," says Maria Caro, a Mission Linen worker and new UNITE member in Phoenix. "The company thought we were alone. But we weren't." @



UNITE-D: Workers in three states joined together for a voice at work at Mission Linen Supply.

Coast-to-Coast Victory

In San Bernardino, Calif., 10,000 home care workers joined SEIU Local 434B, and another 10,000 joined SEIU Local 250 in Fresno, the latest wins in a multiyear, multiunion campaign to win dignity for the Golden State's caregivers. "It's time for San Bernardino home care workers to have a strong and unified voice," says Local 434B President Tyrone Freeman.

On the East Coast, the Laborers' campaign in the New Jersey demolition industry and the Long Island, N.Y., asbestos removal industry has won so many victories that the majority of those markets now are unionized. In New Jersey, the union workers' market share is 70 percent; in Long Island, it grew from 5 percent to 50 percent in just eight months. "These are examples for our entire union," says Laborers President Terence O'Sullivan. @

LAUNCHING VOICE@WORK MONTH

Thousands of union activists and their allies among community groups, religious congregations and elected officials celebrated *Voice@Work Month* in June, to draw attention to the employer intimidation workers face when they try to organize for a voice on the job.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and United Food and Commercial Workers President Doug Dority kicked off the month by getting arrested at Shaw's Supermarket in Worcester, Mass., protesting the company's unilateral cancellation of the workers' union contract.

And for the first time in more than a decade, there was a Senate hearing on Capitol Hill exploring workers' right to a voice on the job. Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, convened the hearing,

at which workers told elected officials about the harassment and intimidation they experienced when trying to win a voice on the job and why U.S. labor law needs reform.

At swanky shopping districts across the country, activists passed out leaflets at Gucci stores to draw attention to workers' efforts to form a union with UNITE at Brylane, a mail-order distribution center owned by the same French conglomerate as the luxury retailer.

Workers forming a union with UAW at a Honda plant in Springfield, Ohio, held a town hall meeting in city council chambers with elected officials to discuss health and safety problems at the plant.

To find out more about *Voice@Work Month*, visit www.aflcio.org and look for in-depth coverage of events in the August 2002 *America@work*. @



In Protest: UFCW President Douglas Dority, arrested at Shaw's.

Union Summer Takes Off

More than 150 college and graduate students are spending their summer vacations helping workers win a voice at work and spreading the message of economic and social justice across the country and around the world as interns in four AFL-CIO programs: Union Summer, Seminary Summer, Law Student Union Summer and International Union Summer.

Students and workers in the four-week Union Summer program also will get hands-on experience in helping workers win a voice at work, and already are taking part in projects ranging from helping state workers in Georgia win a voice at work to joining in a campaign among Food Lion and Wal-Mart employees in the Washington, D.C., area. More than 2,300 activists have taken part in

Union Summer since its launch in 1996.

Ten law students are working in eight unions across the country as part of a 10-week program of legal and organizing work in support of first contract campaigns or workers seeking a voice at work. The students assist with the front-line investigatory and legal work necessary to successfully prosecute charges of unfair labor practices, objectionable election conduct and other employment claims.

Another 28 seminarians, novices, rabbinical students and other future religious leaders are in Seminary Summer, serving as witnesses to workers' struggles for a voice in the workplace and working with religious, community and union activists to build support for workers organizing unions. @

Child Laborers Get to be Children

Through the efforts of the AFT and other organizations, a group of rescued child laborers from around the world had the chance to do what all kids should be free to do—play ball and have a good time.

Former child laborers from India, Liberia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, South Africa and other countries traveled to Washington, D.C., in May, where they met with Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and World Bank representatives from their home countries.

But for the children, some as young as 8, the highlight of their visit was the chance to run across a soccer field with students from two local high schools, Bell Multicultural and Cardozo. They were joined by professional soccer players Ann Cook from the Washington Freedom who helped draw attention to the more than 250 million children around the world who still are forced to work.

Some of the children "have been branded and beaten for simply wanting to go back to their mothers," says Kailash Satyarthi, chairman of the Global March Against Child Labor, which campaigns internationally to free children from work and enable them to go to school. June 12 marked the first-ever World Day Against Child Labor.

AFT helped sponsor the event because teachers "recognize the link between providing universal education for children and ending conditions where children are forced into work," says AFT Public Affairs Director Alexander Wohl. The U.S. students who joined in the soccer game have studied child labor using "Lost Futures: The Problem of Child Labor," a curriculum created by AFT. @



Kids' work: Former child laborer play soccer in Washington, D.C.

A Million Voices for Legalization

A coalition of unions, religious, ethnic, community and immigrant organizations recently announced the "A Million Voices for Legalization" campaign to gather a million postcards before the November elections. Their goal: to demonstrate the broad public support for immigration policies that give working, tax-paying immigrants already in the United States the opportunity to earn legal status.

To download a postcard in English, Spanish or Polish, visit www.seiu.org.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court in March issued a 5-4 decision (*Hoffman Plastics Compound v. NLRB*) that federal immigration policies prohibit the National Labor Relations Board from awarding undocumented workers back pay.

For more information on the *Hoffman Plastics* decision, visit www.civilrights.org/issues/immigration. @

Union Support Helps Laid-off Enron Workers Win \$34 Million

This spring, as more than 4,200 laid-off Enron workers searched for jobs and struggled to pay bills, union activists helped the Enron workers battle for a fairer severance package. Workers' severance money was frozen while the company paid out hundreds of millions to executives—and activists emphasized this injustice in leaflets distributed at creditor committee banks coast to coast. Union activists flooded the offices of creditor committee members with more than 55,000 faxes and phone calls while more than a dozen AFL-CIO "No More Business as Usual" town hall meetings nationwide involved union and community activists in the struggle.

These actions—coordinated with the Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-Texas)—paid off big-time June 11 when activists, the Enron Corp. and its largest creditors announced a tentative agreement in which the former workers will receive at least \$34 million total in additional severance pay, up to \$13,500 per person. Before the campaign began, the cap was \$4,500 per person—despite Enron's severance plan that called for laid-off workers to receive a week's pay for every year of service plus a week's pay for every \$10,000 in salary.

The agreement also allows the \$80 million in so-called retention bonuses that Enron executives raked in on the eve of bankruptcy to be distributed to employees if the money is recovered. The \$80 million is a part of the \$745 million in payments and stock awards they received but did not disclose in bankruptcy court until June 17.

"I'm surprised and happy about the agreement," says Louis Allen, a single dad who supervised transportation for Enron and is still looking for work. "Many of us with financial responsibilities have been in desperate need of assistance." Allen calculates he will get nearly \$8,000 under the agreement: "With this money, the worst is behind me." @



New UAW Leadership

Delegates to the UAW convention last month elected Ron Gettelfinger president and Elizabeth Bunn secretary-treasurer. Gettelfinger takes over from Stephen Yokich, who led the UAW for seven years. Bunn is the first woman to hold that union post. In his acceptance speech, Gettelfinger said organizing will be a top priority. "Organizing is tough, but the difficult challenges we face in a climate that is hostile will not deter our commitment, because a union is truly the only instrument in this nation that allows working people to defend their common interest, and every worker should have that right." Just days later, on June 14, UAW members at Johnson Controls Inc. won a ground-breaking victory when the company agreed to strong economic benefits and to remain neutral and honor workers' choices by card-check at 26 plants employing 8,000 workers. @

OUT FRONT

The solidarity of working families won \$34 million for former Enron workers (see story, this page). That's what did it.

America was properly outraged at the corporate excesses and abuses that led to Enron's bankruptcy and the destruction of Enron employees' livelihoods. And we took action.

Working families took the time to flood executive offices of Enron and its creditors with 55,000 faxes and phone messages demanding fair severance payments for the workers dismissed as the giant corporation collapsed into bankruptcy. Working families took the time to leaflet in front of creditors' headquarters buildings and turn out for town hall meetings across the country to demand No More Business As Usual.

And working families supported their unions and the AFL-CIO in fighting for justice for people who were not union members but were brothers and sisters in the family of workers.

The hardships former Enron workers have endured since the company's downfall—loss of jobs, loss of faith—could befall any worker, anywhere, if we are not united for corporate accountability.

The Enron workers and their supporters across the country were determined not to settle for less than they deserved, even when an opposing lawyer swore they would never receive a penny more than Enron's original, wholly inadequate offer.

These Enron workers have told us they had never thought about needing a union while the company was in its heyday. They were treated well and their company stock swelled.

Then, Digna Showers, an 18-year Enron employee, and her co-workers were called to a meeting and told they had a half-hour to pack their belongings. Showers lost her job—the main support for her family—as well as medical insurance, dental insurance, life insurance and her pension, and the Enron stock she had spent years investing in and counting on for retirement became worthless.

"Things sure would have been different if there were a union at Enron," she says now. "All of this probably wouldn't have happened, because the union would have been in there checking what was going on."

The victory in the fight for fair severance packages for former Enron workers—a virtually unprecedented win in a bankruptcy system that watches out for corporate creditors at the expense of workers—proves that workers united can win against corporate greed. We can demand that corporations be held accountable for their business practices, accounting gimmickry and how they treat workers, their communities and the environment.

Working families and our unions together can turn the tide and make it clear to CEOs and politicians that the working public, the consuming public and the investing public will not accept or settle for the slop left over after the pigs have fed at the trough. @

Workers Helping Workers



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

**Student activism—most recently reborn
in the fight to end sweatshops—
more and more is expanding
to include workers' rights issues
on campus and beyond**



Opening doors: Harvard students this spring demanded Herbert "Pug" Winokur Jr., a member of Enron's board of directors, resign from Harvard's governing board.

RICK FRIEDMAN

Carolyn Eggert, a 20-year-old math major at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, didn't know much about the obstacles workers face when they try to form unions. But over the past year, she started learning more about campus dining hall workers' efforts to gain a voice at work. "It was the first time I'd heard about intimidation," she says. "That just shouldn't happen."

Galvanized by a sense of injustice, Eggert became involved in a student campaign to support the workers' organizing effort with Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 10. She helped persuade the university's undergraduate student government and faculty governing body to pass resolutions backing the workers' request to join the union by a card-check—in which an employer agrees to recognize a union after a majority of workers sign union authorization cards—allowing them to bypass the often lengthy and contentious union election process. She attended a rally last fall where protesters carried huge cardboard forks, knives and spoons to show their support for dining hall workers. This spring, Eggert helped mobilize students for a rally to protest the firing of two cafeteria workers for making phone calls and handing out leaflets in support of the union. The rally turned into a celebration when—under pressure from the students—the food service contractor employed by the university announced it was rehiring the workers.

"Students are starting to be more interested in social justice and equality," says Eggert. "And we see the labor movement as central to the struggle for social justice."

Young people on college campuses are invigorating the union movement with their energy, enthusiasm and new ideas. More than ever, they are working with union leaders at the national, state and local levels, who say campus activists are crucial allies in helping workers at col-

'Talkin' 'Bout My Gene



Connecting with workers: Case Western Reserve students are among activists at universities across the nation supporting campus workers' right to living wages.

leges and in surrounding communities form unions and win living wages. "Campus activists are getting more sophisticated and seeing all the ways worker exploitation is connected," says senior social studies major Ben McKean, who was active in Harvard University's living wage campaign last year and the successful drive to oust an Enron board member from the university's governing body this spring. Union leaders are engaging this enthusiasm to build a new generation of activists for workers' rights.

On campus—and beyond

The flowering of student activism several years ago in support of graduate employee organizing and curtailing abuses in overseas sweatshops sewing college-logo garments is expanding to include workers' rights issues affecting low-income workers on campus and beyond.

Since 1998, graduate employees at seven universities have formed unions—including those at New York University, who made history last year by becoming the first such workers at a private college to organize and who now are members of UAW Local 2110. In 1999, the U.S. Student Association (USSA) and Jobs with Justice (JwJ) joined to form the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP), a national network of student organizers, to support workers in their communities. And in less than four years, United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) grew from an idea to a network of more than 250 campus groups, including high schools and community colleges. More than 100 campuses have strong codes of conduct that govern the

conditions under which logo-bearing clothing is sewn.

Building on these successes, campus activists are broadening and deepening their efforts on behalf of workers' rights on their campuses and communities, demonstrating a growing understanding of why workers want unions and the role of unions in improving workers' lives. For instance, Harvard University students waged a three-week sit-in at the university's administration building last spring, winning a living wage for campus janitors. They've followed up by pressuring Herbert "Pug" Winokur Jr., a member of Enron's board of directors, to resign from Harvard's governing board after working with other activists to research a report uncovering the links between the scandal-ridden corporation and the university. "The people who run the school have been obstacles to workers' rights," says McKean. "Look who is preventing our workers from getting a living wage: It's a lot of the same people who are screwing the workers at Enron."

Encouraged by the high-profile Harvard sit-in, college activists across the country are standing with the workers who clean their classrooms and serve food in their cafeterias. This spring, Lolita Roibal was one of thousands of college students joining union activists rallying in support of living wages for campus workers. The Stanford University junior wants administrators at the prestigious California campus to institute a code of conduct for fair treatment of university employees. More than 700 activists rallied during Stanford's first-ever "community day" in April. "Our



money goes to paying the workers," she says. "We see the workers right in front of our eyes." Only two months after the march, the university and food service workers, members of SEIU Local 715, agreed on a ground-breaking new contract that gives subcontracted workers pay parity with directly hired workers as well as health benefits. As Roibal and other student and labor activists point out, students are crucial allies because they have leverage as stakeholders on their campuses and they have day-to-day contact with the workers.

"A successful campaign has to involve the union, workers and students," says Eggert from Case Western. Like Roibal, Eggert rallied in April on her campus. Both events were part of the third annual

Creating Campus Activists Through Union Summer

Many campus activists got their start through the AFL-CIO Union Summer program. This year, more than 150 students and workers are taking part in Union Summer for four intensive weeks of learning about and participating in union organizing (see story, page 6). From Atlanta to Chicago to New York City, the budding activists will help workers build the strength they need to win a voice on the job.

For more information, check out www.aflcio.org/unionsummer

ration

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICH

April 4th National Student Labor Day of Action, sponsored by SLAP and the USSA, held on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination to honor his legacy of standing with workers. Several central labor councils worked with students to plan events and AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney joined ralliers at the Washington, D.C., event. Students at more than 100 universities marched, rallied and held teach-ins this year.

Students such as Eggert are eager to learn the tools of the activist trade from union leaders. "Not all students are necessarily 'pro-union.' They are pro-living wage and they have an idyllic wish that employers and workers can work things out," she says, noting that students need to hear from union members that it is only through a union that workers can have a real voice on the job. "Students do gradu-

ally realize that there has to be something there to shift the power." With their organizing experience and contacts with elected officials, unions are "a really valuable resource" for students, Eggert says.

Unions look for ways to connect with students

Recognizing the burgeoning enthusiasm for worker justice on campuses, union leaders are developing innovative ways to channel that energy. In Connecticut, leaders of the Greater Hartford Labor Council helped put together a statewide student-union coalition and hosted a summit for campus and union activists last fall, an event that drew 120 people. Inspired by the success of student demonstrators helping janitors win better pay at the University of Connecticut in Storrs last year, union leaders are helping bring together students from Yale University, Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU), Wesleyan University and other schools to support campaigns at those campuses. Students at Fairfield University went on a hunger strike to support janitors organizing with SEIU, who eventually won, and are supporting a coordinated campaign at Yale to help graduate employees organize with HERE and hospital and campus workers to win fair contracts.

"In Connecticut, there are lots of universities, but the activists hadn't been in contact with each other," says Elizabeth Broad, an activist at Fairfield. "Now we get to meet other students doing the same kind of stuff," says Broad, also an intern at the local central labor council, whose work is supported by the national AFL-CIO as part of the federation's Union Cities initiative to revitalize labor councils. Interns also work at 17 other labor councils that were recognized as Union Cities at the 2001 AFL-CIO convention. Unions need to help create lasting structures for student activism on campuses, says Broad, noting that students graduate in four-year cycles, but social justice campaigns are ongoing. "When these students make a commitment, they stick to it," says Judy Warfield, president of the Hartford Labor Council, adding that the students surpassed their pledge to turn out fellow activists for an April rally supporting HERE workers at Eastern Connecticut fighting for a fair contract. "We've had tremendous results with them," says Warfield.

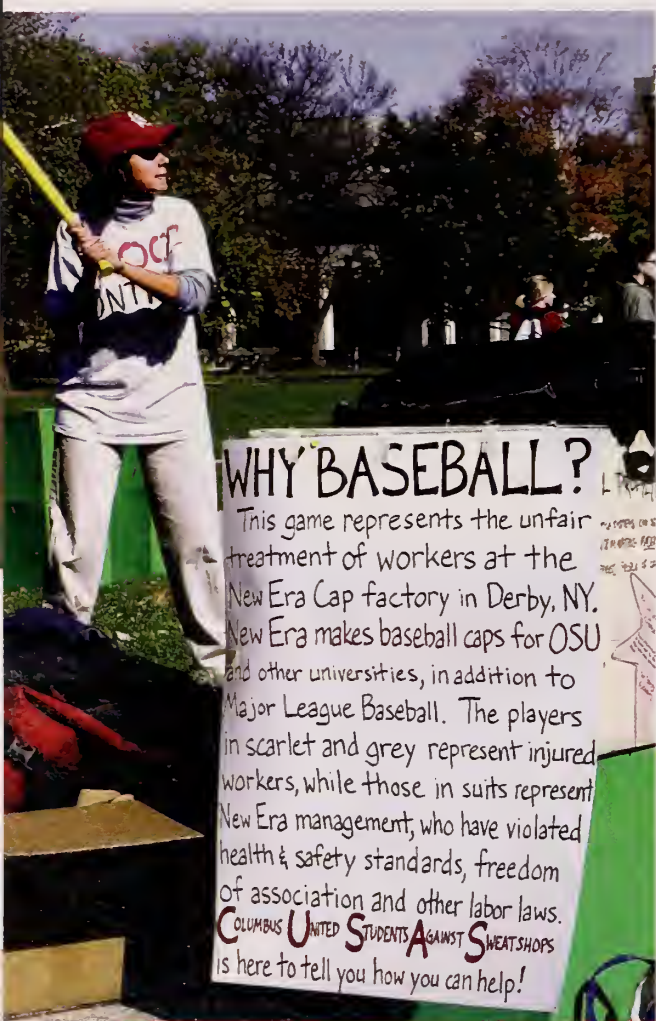


STEVE CAGEN

"By helping workers win living wages and standing in solidarity with janitors, students are making immediate, tangible differences in workers' lives," says Elaine Bernard, executive director of the Harvard Trade Union Program. The majority of students also work, Bernard notes, so they are developing consciousness and skills that can help them fight for justice in their own workplaces (see the August 2002 issue of *America@work* for more on young workers). In the longer term, "students are learning about unions, becoming aware of the workplace as a place where workers don't have rights—and being outraged about that, which is a very exciting thing for the union movement," she says. As union leaders reach out to students, the young activists will gain "a sense that workers have rights and need to form unions to exercise those rights."

HERE, for example, is working to develop that awareness and convert it into action on campuses. The union deploys a full-time liaison to support students and faculty members who want to aid organizing campaigns. Andrea Calver, HERE's campus liaison, credits USAS for "politicizing a ton of students about 'following the money' on their campuses," leading to increased activism on behalf of campus workers. At its conference last year in Chicago, members of USAS voted to create a campus and community solidarity committee, making official what already is happening on campuses.

Like Broad, Calver says unions need to make a long-term commitment to building



ANNIE HECK/THE OHIO STATE LANTERN

Beyond campus: Students across the nation, such as at Ohio State University (above), joined with CWA members to win good wages and a fair contract for workers who make caps for the New Era Cap Co.



Tuned in: Students at Case Western Reserve have helped bring justice to the university's cafeteria workers.

campus activism. "There is a lot of turnover, so unions need to keep going back to campuses and educating students on basic labor issues, because they don't learn about unions in school," she says.

Communitywide student action

As more unions reach out to college campuses, students now are looking beyond the walls of their schools to aid workers' rights struggles in their communities.

During the April 4 day of action two years ago, students from several universities in Indiana rallied with sanitation workers struggling to form a union with AFSCME Local 1734 in Richmond. Since then, the workers won a voice at work and negotiated a strong contract. This year, the students rallied with workers at the catalog marketing and distribution center Brylane who are trying to form a union with UNITE.

Workers at the New Era Cap Co. in Derby, N.Y., benefited from the power of student solidarity. The members of Communications Workers of America Local 14177 make caps for many universities and major league baseball teams, but went out on strike in July 2001 when the company unilaterally slashed wages and refused to bargain for a fair contract. Since then, anti-sweatshop student activists on 10 campuses persuaded administrators to drop contracts with the company. In addition, students at the Workers Rights Consortium (the nonprofit group created by colleges, students and labor rights experts to help enforce campus manufacturing codes of conduct) researched conditions at the factory and released a

report in August 2001 that documents allegations of health and safety problems at the plant as well as the company's unrelenting anti-union campaign.

In June, the workers and the company agreed to a strong tentative contract.

"If it weren't for the students helping us spread our message, we wouldn't have gotten to the point we did," says Local 14177 President Jane Howald. Bennett Baumer, an Indiana University student active in the successful campaign at his campus to drop New Era caps, says students increasingly realize sweatshop conditions overseas bring down standards of decent working conditions in the United States. "This is globalization," he says. "The international and national run together. We can't ignore each other anymore."

As students and workers join together in campaigns for social justice, they are strengthened by their experiences. "Students have a much clearer idea of what workers face when they are organizing," says HERE's Calver. "They are well-equipped to deal with their campus administrations and employers and can talk directly to the workers," she says. "And when students get involved, workers see a much broader movement behind them." @

Coming in the August *America@work:*

How unions are reaching out to young workers with a passion for justice.

Marching in Partnership with Yale and its Unions

Jacob Remes, who graduated from Yale University in May 2002 with a degree in history, was active in anti-sweatshop and local organizing campaigns. Remes adapted the following from the final column he wrote for the Yale Daily News, sharing his passion for justice that became informed through involvement in direct action.

"I've spent four years battling the Yale University administration, yet I love and am proud of Yale. More than anything else, Yale is a community, and all of us in that community—students, faculty, workers—are devoted to education and research, finding and debating truth and training future leaders.

Leadership at Yale comes from many quarters. Workers at the university and its teaching hospital are at the forefront of developing innovative ways to solve problems that make U.S. labor law undemocratic and—according to a report released by Human Rights Watch—violate basic international human rights principles.

Our graduate students, who are organizing into the Graduate Employees and Students Organization, affiliated with Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees, led the way in 1999, exposing the way Yale increasingly is relying on graduate teaching assistants who have few rights on the job. They then helped coordinate a study of universities nationwide that highlighted similar problems across academia.

A coalition of law students, graduate researchers and other Yale students were in the forefront last year when the coalition pressured the administration to force Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. to sell an essential, Yale-developed anti-AIDS drug at below-market prices in South Africa. Yale was the only university to release a medication that way.

Sometimes, though, Yale refuses to lead. Yale's failure to protect the workers who make its sweatshirts and jackets from the abuses of sweatshops by refusing to set up a meaningful ethical licensing policy remains a scar on our community.

Perhaps the most painful aspect of our history has been the 34 years of union conflict that started when the administration tried to break HERE Local 35, which represents service and maintenance workers, in 1968.

I am proud that Yale is changing. The innovative methods now being used by negotiators already have resulted in an agreement limiting subcontracting and promoting job growth for clerical and technical workers.

But Yale needs help changing. That's why I've marched to support the new partnership between Yale and its unions.

I love Yale. But sometimes, loved ones need a push in the right direction."

Nuts and Bolts

BY MIKE HALL

Union members and staff seeking to hone their political campaign management skills, refine their get-out-the-vote efforts or even run for public office are turning to the AFL-CIO Institute for Political Leadership to win their races and meet their goals.

Connie Lewis wants to mobilize Michigan union families for important state and congressional races this fall as part of her new job as state coordinator for AFSCME's PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) program.

Joe Smith says it's time to defeat an Oklahoma lawmaker who was a key backer of the state's successful 2001 right to work for less ballot initiative. The Electrical Workers Local 1141 member says he's the one to win the race—and Smith will get his chance in the state's Aug. 27 state Senate primary.

In northeastern Ohio, SEIU/District 1199 member Jack Kilroy has volunteered to manage the state Senate campaign of nurse and 1199 colleague Sue Morano.

Lewis, Smith and Kilroy recently participated in

the first-ever class of the AFL-CIO Institute for Political Leadership. Sponsored by the George Meany Center for Labor Studies-National Labor College and the University of Baltimore School of Public Affairs, in conjunction with the federation, the intensive, weeklong session at the Meany Center in suburban Washington, D.C., covered the nuts and bolts of politics—from polling techniques and message development and delivery to volunteer recruitment, fund-raising and mobilizing partners.

More than three dozen union members from 15 unions heard from political pros like the *National Journal's* Charlie Cook, editor and publisher of the influential *The Cook Political Report*, CNN's *Crossfire* co-host Paul Begala and Bradley Knott, a U.S. Department of Labor administrative law judge and University of Maryland employment law and business ethics professor. Participants also took part in mock campaigns, including developing strategies for four current U.S. Senate races, utilizing their recent lessons on such topics as voter targeting and contact, recruiting volunteers, developing a campaign budget, fund-raising, advertising and get-out-the-vote techniques.



Connie Lewis

Reach out to young people

The institute is taking on a vital role in the union movement's political mobilization strategy of involving union families in political action—from voting on Election Day to running for public office.

"I'm 48 years old and I've seen how politics is connected to everyday life, from civil rights to jobs to health care," says Lewis, who has been a 911 operator at the Detroit Police Department for the past 20 years while raising two sons. "But now I have to reach a lot of people, especially young people in their 20s, and try to show them that politics and getting involved is relevant to their everyday lives."

Tapped for the statewide PEOPLE's chair a few weeks prior to the Institute for Political Leadership session, Lewis says Begala's tactics for developing and delivering a message—tell a story, be brief, use emotion and be relevant—gave her ideas for mobilizing the 60,000 AFSCME Council 25 members in Michigan and their family members to vote.

"Sometimes we are not reaching our union members, our younger members. He might have been talking about bigger picture campaigns, but the same rules can work to show our members how politics are connected to issues they care about, insurance co-pays or prescription drug prices," Lewis says.

Political Action

Plans are under way for a second Institute for Political Leadership in 2003. E-mail lrchlen@afcio.org if you would like to be notified when details are available.

Joe Smith

Knock on every door

After a year in Oklahoma, right to work for less forces, with help from out-of-state allies such as anti-union Wal-Mart, amassed a \$5 million chest and won the I-695 ballot initiative race by a 54-46 percent margin. But that gap against working families had been as high as 22 percent before Smith and the state's unions launched their get-out-the-vote mobilization, which included registering some 25,000 union member voters.

After working 14 to 16 hours a day to turn out the union vote against the right to work for less initiative, Smith says he is inspired to run against state senator and 695-backer David Herbert, because Herbert "calls himself a Democrat and he's more like a right-wing Republican." One of the more informative sessions for Smith was "What's It Like to be a Candidate" with Maryland House of Delegates member Peter Branchot (D).

"It's the knock-on-the-door, person-to-person contact that really counts," says Smith, father of a 5-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter. Branchot told the students it was the daily campaign nitty-gritty of meeting voters that helped him win his first race. "In previous elections, I knocked on every door, evenings, weekends—whenever I could. And when I got done, I wrote their name and number on a 3-by-5 card and made sure I called them back. A Palm Pilot might make that easier today, but the theory is the same."

Branchot, who told the students, "two months of door-knocking can upset the establishment," has an avid student in Smith: "I'm personally going to get out and knock on every door in my district," promises the Oklahoma City electrician.

Jack Kilroy

Make one-on-one contact

Kilroy knows personal contact is vital to any campaign—it was key to his successful election to the Avon [Ohio] City Council. To propel Sue Morano into the Ohio State Senate, he plans to build on one-on-one outreach with the other lessons he learned during the seven days of institute training.

The longtime grassroots activist, familiar with campaign fundamentals covered in the sessions, says it was the more detailed and technical information on voter targeting and voter research—such as identifying voters likely to cast ballots, those who can be persuaded (as opposed to hardcore party loyalists) and the best ways to contact them—that added critical tactics to his campaign toolbox. Detailed voter targeting allows a campaign to set priorities for its resources and efforts.

"If you do those things right, that can be the difference between just running a good campaign and winning," Kilroy says.

Forty percent of the voting households in Morano's district have union members—and Kilroy's job is to make sure her campaign reaches those households.

"We want them to know they have a chance to elect someone who cares," says Kilroy, describing Morano as "a working nurse with three kids in public school, a husband who is a Machinist," and someone who knows the importance of a living wage, jobs, health care and affordable prescription medication.

The AFL-CIO Institute for Political Leadership reinforces the union movement's emphasis on getting more union members—people who will fight for a working families agenda—involved in hands-on political action.

Whether through the Target 5000 initiative to elect union members to office, training key campaign advisers or working with unions to mobilize working families, these first graduates will move that goal forward.

Morano's opponent, State Sen. Jeffrey Armbruster, was the beneficiary of "gobs of state party money" in the last election, according to the *Lorain Chronicle Telegram*. But Kilroy says, "with a real-life working family candidate and the techniques I've learned here about reaching and motivating our voters," people-powered politics just might overcome dollar-driven politics. @



Sue MORANO

Elect someone who cares

- To make Ohio a better place to live and work and raise a family.
- To invest in Ohio, revitalize our economy, and create more good jobs.
- To make health care and prescription drugs affordable for everyone.
- To open doors for the next generation with better schools and lower college tuition.

Sue Morano

STATE ACTION

As they fight for a working families agenda, activists at the state level also are battling with behind-the-scenes groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (see page 18) that devise schemes to pass anti-worker legislation

Union activists are advancing a working families agenda state by state

B Y M I K E H A L L

A little more than a year ago, the nation's economic future was as bright as it had been in a decade. Projections for the nation's budget surplus seemed to grow every day. And even as signs of a recession began appearing, the budget surplus was viewed as a shield against any serious downturn. The only question seemed to be: Would the surplus be channeled to address working families' soaring health care costs? Create decent jobs at livable wages? Strengthen Social Security?

The Bush administration answered those questions when President George W. Bush mounted a massive campaign to win a \$1.6 trillion tax cut that sent almost all of its largesse to the wealthy. Bush and the Republican Congress promised there was more than enough to go around—working families would get theirs later.

Later hasn't come for working families. The Bush recession, after eight years of economic growth under the Clinton administration, worsened, and layoffs began to grow. When terrorists struck Sept. 11, the economic aftershocks that rolled through

the economy nearly devastated some industries, such as aviation and hospitality, with hundreds of thousands of workers losing their jobs, their health insurance and their retirement security. Many didn't qualify for unemployment benefits or exhausted benefits.

Yet help for working families was held hostage for months as

Bush and his allies in Congress insisted on tying economic relief for working families to huge tax breaks for business.

In January, the AFL-CIO, state federations and working family groups around the nation joined together to put even more resources and efforts on issues at the state level.

"I find it insulting that the president blew the surplus and put this nation back into deficits without taking one step for working families," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said at one of the more than two dozen events around the nation to kick off the union movement's state-level efforts to focus on passage of key issues.

Through state federations' year-round political action, outreach to community allies and the resurgence of the National Labor Caucus of State Legislators—a forum for union member and union-friendly lawmakers (see story, page 17)—activists are making strides in unemployment insurance reform, affordable prescription medication, workers' rights, corporate accountability and other key items in the working families' agenda.

Unemployment insurance

Unemployment insurance (UI) is the first line of defense during economic downturns—not only because it provides vital income support to laid-off workers but also because the money workers receive



BILL LOOBY

BILL LOOBY

RE UNION

WE VOTE

CAL 241



WE'RE UNION

& WE VOTE

LOVE 5-7



from UI returns to the community, boosting and stabilizing local economies.

But more than 40 percent of jobless workers cannot collect unemployment insurance because of outdated and narrow eligibility rules. Women, low-wage and part-time workers are the hardest hit. Benefits vary from state to state, but for the most part, weekly benefits are inadequate and workers typically receive benefits for no more than 26 weeks.

After months of Bush administration and Republican roadblocks to extending, expanding and improving UI benefits, working families in about two dozen states went to their state legislators this year for help.

In Wisconsin, the state federation led a successful fight to win an eight-week extension of benefits in March. During a special February session of the Oregon legislature, working families and their unions secured a 13-week extension and a \$20-a-week boost in benefits. A 13-week extension also was approved in Hawaii.

"We're working with a lot of people, civil rights and women's groups, pressing the legislature on UI," says Missouri

Next steps: Building on their mobilization around statewide issues campaigns, Illinois union activists are getting set to register 250,000 new union voters.

AFL-CIO President Hugh McVey.

When Michigan's legislature tacked on a "penalty week" to a UI increase, the Michigan State AFL-CIO mobilized union members, student, religious and other groups to rally on the capitol steps in Lansing to protest the proposed waiting period.

While the "penalty week" was dropped and the final legislation raised benefits for some workers, state federation President Mark Gaffney says the issue is far from dead, because about 40 percent of the state's jobless workers still do not qualify for the increase. He has urged the legislature to revisit the UI issue.

Only the embarrassment of the approaching six-month anniversary of Sept. 11 forced Bush and congressional Republicans to drop their resistance to a minimal 13-week UI extension—loaded with Big Business tax breaks—in March that also provided states with some \$8 bil-

lion for other UI expenses, such as expanding eligibility or raising benefits.

The California Federation of Labor threw its support behind several UI bills, including legislation that will provide a retroactive \$100-a-week benefit increase to workers receiving UI benefits on or after Sept. 11. The increase initially covered only workers who applied after Jan. 1, 2002. Gov. Gray Davis (D) signed the retroactivity bill into law at the federation's June legislative conference.

Affordable prescription medication

Prior to the recession, one in four Americans—70 million—did not have insurance to cover prescription drugs. Since the onset of the nation's economic downturn, hundreds of thousands of workers, many who have lost the prescription drug coverage their workplace health plans may have provided, have joined the ranks of the uninsured.

Drug manufacturers sell the same pharmaceuticals to different purchasers at widely varying prices. State Medicaid programs and the federal government are able to leverage their market power to negotiate steep prescription drug discounts. At the same time, on average, uninsured families pay a whopping 100 percent more than the federal government pays for the same drugs, according to the nonprofit Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA).



Victory: California union activists successfully pressed for a state unemployment insurance bill, signed by Gov. Gray Davis (above), that increases benefits for workers receiving UI on or after Sept. 11.

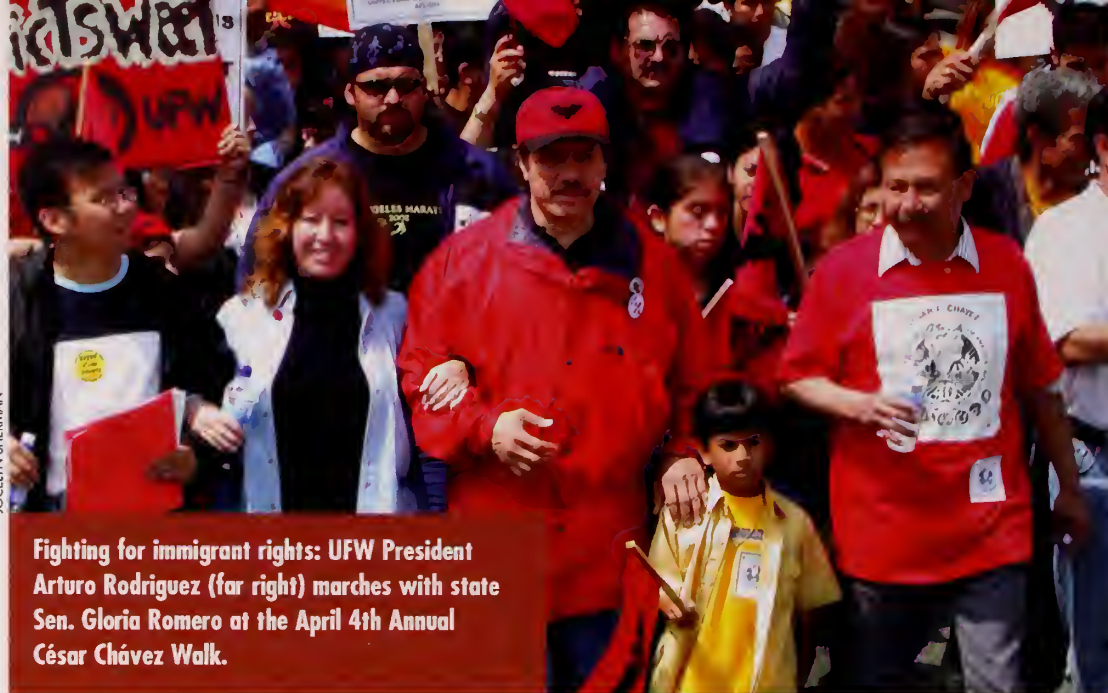
State federations, central labor councils and affiliated unions are modeling their affordable prescription medication legislation on laws enacted in Maine in 2000 through the efforts of union activists like Chellie Pingree. The former Maine State Senate majority leader was the sponsor and driving force behind Maine's legislation, the first prescription medication pricing bill in the nation to direct the state to use its bulk purchasing power to negotiate steep prescription drug discounts for the uninsured, just as the federal government does when it buys prescription drugs for public health programs such as Veterans Affairs hospitals and the Department of Defense.

"The time has come to stop talking about the problem and enact meaningful policies that will substantially reduce the cost of prescription drugs for seniors and all Americans," says Pingree. Term-limited out of office, Pingree is running for the U.S. Senate.

"After seeing what Maine did, we drafted a similar bill last year and we were able to get it introduced, but it was going nowhere. When they didn't move on it, we decided to form this coalition to keep pushing when the legislature returned this year," explains Ohio AFL-CIO President William Burga. The Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs includes unions, senior groups, religious organizations, health care activists and community groups. The group is building support through radio and television ads, packed town hall meetings and union events.

"This is really resonating in the community. We hope it will move the legislature and if not, we've got the groundwork done to try and turn this into a ballot initiative," Burga says.

In Hawaii, unions rallied behind Democratic Rep. Roy Takumi's bill to expand the state's Medicaid discount prescription to include individuals with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. As communications director for Hawaii State AFL-CIO, Takumi had an inside track in building union



Fighting for immigrant rights: UFW President Arturo Rodriguez (far right) marches with state Sen. Gloria Romero at the April 4th Annual César Chávez Walk.

support for the legislation. A campaign of union member lobbying, plus public demonstrations, helped pass Takumi's bill, along with legislation for a discount prescription drug plan open to all the state's residents. Both bills were signed into law in May.

Affordable prescription medication legislation has been introduced in some 26 states and signed into law in Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico and West Virginia.

Corporate accountability and workers' rights

For years, states have provided huge economic development subsidies and tax subsidies to companies—many of which often fail to live up to promises to create jobs, or which only create low-wage jobs that don't support families. And in many cases, these firms fight workers who seek a voice at work. Yet the companies rarely are held

accountable for how they use the money or whether they play by the rules. These "no-strings-attached" subsidies and contracts are bad for states, bad for taxpayers and bad for working families.

In California, Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, who also is a member of the National Labor Caucus, showed how important state-level action can be for working families when he introduced legislation in 2001 banning companies with state contracts from using taxpayer money to influence workers' choices about unionizing. Working with the California federation and other allies, Cedillo succeeded in getting the bill passed and signed into law.

Model bill: Union activists in Maine set the pace for activists across the nation with their efforts to pass legislation making prescription medication more affordable for the state's uninsured.



In June, California union leaders and workers traveled to Sacramento to press for passage of a measure that would allow all workers, documented and undocumented, to receive back pay if they were unfairly fired for such actions as attempting to win a voice at work. A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision denied such awards to undocumented immigrants (see story, page 6).

Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez says the court's decision allows unscrupulous employers to fire workers for union activities because it removes any meaningful penalty for doing so.

"Along with a large coalition of labor and immigrant rights groups, the United Farm Workers is sponsoring Senate Bill 1818, which will protect the rights of immigrant workers," he says.

Even when companies are required to account for how they spend their state-funded subsidies, many hide or bury objectionable activities. In Colorado, the state Senate passed a bill that would have required businesses that receive tax incentives and subsidies to disclose—in an accessible and readable manner—how they are spending taxpayer money. Pro-business forces were able to kill the bill in the House, but several of the bill's provisions, including disclosure of the number of jobs created, their average salary and hourly wages, were added to another bill that passed.

In Washington State, the state labor council's huge mobilization last year to break a 49–49 deadlock in the state Senate paid off handsomely for collective bargaining rights in the recently ended session. Now, with a 50–48 Democratic advantage in the Senate and a sizable House edge, working families have won full collective bargaining rights for more than 20,000 state employees—legislation allowing the University of Washington to recognize the choice of 3,700 teaching assistants to join the UAW/Graduate Student Employee Action Coalition and a bill to allow some 5,000 to 6,000 four-year college and university professors to unionize.

"The state fed's aggressive measures were the real key to our success," says Rep. Steve Conway (D), chairman of the House Commerce and Labor Committee and president of the National Labor Caucus of State Legislators.

"With union members and our allies working together on issues like collective bargaining, the idea is that by joining forces

Union-Friendly Lawmakers Join Forces

Washington State lawmaker Steve Conway recalls that when he first started attending regional and national state legislative meetings, workshops and caucuses were available on small and Big Business interests—but he was "hard-pressed to find any workshops or groups that zeroed in on my main legislative interests, working family and labor issues." Conway, who also serves as secretary-treasurer for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 81 in Tacoma, Wash., is chairman of the Washington State House of Representatives' Commerce and Labor Committee. He holds down a third job, too—president of the more than 200-member National Labor Caucus of State Legislators.

Formed by union member lawmakers and the AFL-CIO in 2001, the bipartisan Labor Caucus brings union member and union-friendly lawmakers together to share ideas about advancing a working families agenda on the state level.

"We help each other out, provide a common forum to share information about what succeeds, what doesn't and develop model legislation we can use. We learn from each other," Conway says.

Several of the current workers' rights, corporate accountability, unemployment insurance and prescription medication bills in state legislatures are identical or based on model legislation developed by the Labor Caucus in conjunction with the AFL-CIO. In Kansas, state Rep. Dale Swenson (R), a Machinist, has led the fight to improve the UI system, including doubling the maximum state benefit. Locomotive Engineer and Ohio State Sen. Bob Hagen (D) is the sponsor of his state's prescription drug legislation.

Most caucus members also belong to the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL). The presence of the Labor Caucus as an official group means working family advocates can participate in workshops and panels, hold their own seminars and events and shape and promote policy for the NCSL.

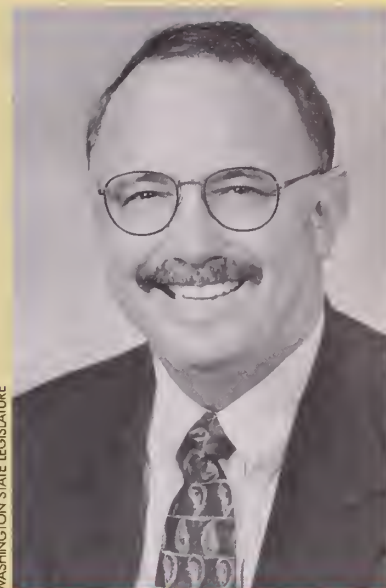
The year-old Labor Caucus already has scored nonlegislative victories for workers. The NCSL's 2003 convention, expected to draw about 3,000 participants, was set for the San Francisco Marriott, where members of Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 2 were in their fifth year of a contract struggle in 2001.

The Labor Caucus persuaded the NCSL to let the hotel know about its concerns and agree not to sign a contract to use the Marriott until the dispute was settled fairly—and due in part to the group's involvement, a pact between HERE Local 2 and the hotel was reached late last year.

The Labor Caucus also successfully lobbied the NCSL to invite AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney as a featured speaker at the organization's annual meeting in Denver in July—the first time a union leader has addressed the NCSL.

"We may be in our infancy, but I know the Labor Caucus has already been a real value to me for the information I've picked up and the contacts I've made," says Conway. "What we need to do now is build a real grassroots-level state legislative movement."

For more information on the National Labor Caucus, visit www.aflcio.org/wfa/state_lc.htm.



WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

Washington State Rep. Steve Conway

and speaking with one united voice on the issues affecting working families, we have more impact," says Washington State Labor Council President Rick Bender.

While working families won several important state legislative fights this year, it's just the start of an ongoing battle. Speaking of the further improvements needed in Michigan's UI reform legislation, Gaffney sums up what's in store for the

entire working families agenda.

"There is still work to be done....If the legislature can't get the job done, we'll have to elect a more worker-friendly legislature this November."

To learn more about state issues and to join the fight for a working families agenda in state legislatures, visit www.aflcio.org/front/wfa.htm and look in the "state issues" section. @

A little-known Washington, D.C.-based organization is working behind the scenes to attack working families state by state

BY JANE BIRNBAUM

At the start of each legislative session in Washington State, union activists face a slew of anti-worker measures like “pay-check deception,” meant to silence workers’ voices in politics and right to work proposals that weaken bargaining power.

“It’s happening everywhere,” says Washington State Labor Council President Rick Bender, “a constant barrage from business working through right-wing legislators.”

Many of those legislators belong to the Washington, D.C.-based American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), an alliance that includes America’s most powerful corporations and trade associations, such as Enron Corp., Microsoft Corp., the Alliance of American Insurers, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. Behind the façade of a bipartisan, good government organization, ALEC—founded in 1973 by right-wing strategist Paul Weyrich, who coined the term “Moral Majority”—pumps out anti-worker, anti-consumer, pro-privatization bills it spoon-feeds to 2,400 mostly Republican state legislators who, along with their families, enjoy luxurious, all-expenses-paid stays at ALEC meetings. By working behind the scenes, through state lawmakers, ALEC ensures that bills moving through state legislatures frequently do not bear ALEC’s fingerprints.

ALEC GOAL: Co-opting state lawmakers

While legislators pay ALEC \$50 for two-year memberships, corporate members pony up dues as high as \$50,000 annually, plus fees between \$1,500 and \$5,000 to sit on “task forces” that produce model bills. These bills are prototypes that ALEC’s legislative members can introduce back home, maximizing ALEC’s effectiveness. Unlike grassroots movements that campaign for legislation, such as the staunchly bipartisan National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) or the progressive Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA)—which produces model bills but has no legislator members and receives mostly foundation dollars—ALEC is a cabal of corporations and reactionaries “impersonating a legislative group” and spending millions to usurp state government, says CPA Policy Director Bernie Horn.

ALEC boasts that more than 100 of its members hold senior leadership positions in their state legislatures, while hundreds more hold key committee leadership positions. Governors like John Engler (R-Mich.) and more than 80 members of Congress—including House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) and House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Texas)—all are ALEC “alumni.” (ALEC includes a partial list of former members in its annual report, available at www.alec.org.)

Big Business and far right-wing contributors such as Richard Mellon Scaife accounted for 97.9 percent of ALEC’s \$5.7 million revenue in 2000, according to a recent report by the environmental non-profit groups Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Defenders of Wildlife. (For a copy of *Corporate America’s Trojan Horse in the States: The Untold Story Behind the American Legislative Exchange Council*, visit www.alecwatch.org.)

OUTING

ALEC

Their investments are paying off: According to ALEC, its affiliated legislators introduced 3,100 ALEC-generated bills during the 1999–2000 statehouse cycle and more than 450 passed.

“ALEC allows these corporations to do what they couldn’t attempt directly or openly without risking public criticism,” the report finds. “They funnel cash through ALEC to

Hiding Behind State Lawmakers

curry favor with state lawmakers through junkets and other largesse in the hopes of enacting special-interest legislation—all the while keeping safely outside the public eye.”

ALEC GOAL: Attacking living wages

Many of the anti-union, anti-worker bills come from ALEC's Commerce and Economic Development task force, chaired this year by a representative of the low-wage champion McDonald's Corp. Many of the bills are aimed at curtailing union political activity—and are given innocuous names like “Public Employees Freedom Act” and the “Resolution on Release Time for Union Business.” Others target low-wage workers: “Resolution Opposing Any Increase in the Starting Wage”—referring to the minimum wage.

Living wage ordinances, which ensure working families can live above poverty levels, have been passed in cities and towns around the country through the efforts of unions and their allies. Now they appear to be a major ALEC target. The model legislation webpage of ALEC's Commerce and Economic Development task force includes a long list of model bills in which only one is spelled out in all capital letters for emphasis—the “LIVING WAGE MANDATE PREEMPTION ACT.”

In Oregon, the state legislature this spring passed a law prohibiting some local governments from passing living wage ordinances. Democratic state representative Diane Rosenbaum, a member of Communications Workers of America Local 7901, doesn't know if the bill is connected to ALEC. But it's quite possible, she says: “I'd never heard of something like this, and suddenly I've learned it's being pushed in a number of states.” (Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Mississippi, Utah and Oregon have passed some form of living wage pre-emption legislation, which also has been introduced in Michigan, Florida and South Carolina.)

ALEC GOAL: Gutting retirement

Privatization of government services and ensuring Big Business profits also are high on the ALEC agenda. The organization's “Public Employees' Portable Retirement Option (PRO) Act” weakens state government workers' defined-benefit pension plans by getting states to approve defined-contribution plans. In such defined-contribution plans as 401(k)s, retirement funds are dependent on stock market gyrations and workers are not guaranteed a pension, as they would be under defined-benefit pension plans. At the

State legislators—many of whom are part-time workers with no staffs, travel budgets or defined personal agendas—are vulnerable to ALEC, says John Freeman, Midwest region director of the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA), a nonprofit public policy organization that promotes progressive model legislation.

When Freeman was a Michigan freshman state representative in 1993, he received an invitation from ALEC to attend a local conference. “Within the first five minutes I knew it was a pro-business, anti-union thing,” he recalls, “and I stayed because it's always useful to understand the enemy.”

“But there are people who are open to being brought over. Like when you represent a midwestern rural district, and suddenly lobbyists want to fly you and your family to someplace like New York, where ALEC held its conference last year at a luxury hotel in Times Square. Why, of course, you feel you've got to play ball a little.”

ALEC's website (www.alec.org) shows Big Business is running the show: “ALEC provides the private sector with a unique opportunity to have their voices heard, and perspectives appreciated,” it says. The legislation prototypes coming out of each task force—where corporate members have a co-chair and votes equal to those of the legislators—are “directly based on which corporations pay to participate,” says Bernie Horn, the CPAs' policy director, who has attended ALEC meetings. Corporate representatives communicate their requests to ALEC staff members, he adds, who in turn come to meetings with the model bills' language already prepared.

same time, defined-contribution plans help enrich the firms—such as Fidelity Investments, an ALEC member—that manage them. According to ALEC's website, its legislators have proposed such legislation in 17 states, scoring wins in five—so far.

The PRO legislation has passed in Michigan (it excludes teachers and other school employees), West Virginia (where it applies only to teachers) and Florida, Colorado and Washington (with defined-contribution plans included in the mix of plans).

In Michigan, where the legislation passed in 1997, Alan Kilar, the legislative liaison for UAW Local 6000, which represents 20,000 Michigan state human services and administrative support workers, never saw ALEC's fingerprints on the bill. But he knows it has been bad for workers and the public. Some senior workers who switched their pension benefits into the stock market have had significant losses, he says. And turnover has been higher among new workers who, now barred from the traditional pension plans, have less reason to stay, he adds.

In Florida, ALEC started pushing in the mid-1990s for conversion of that state's workers' pension plan—currently the nation's fourth largest, valued at \$94 billion—to a defined-contribution system. ALEC initially worked through member Debbie Sanderson, a state representative (now state senator). When ALEC couldn't get that legislation through, it proposed that all new employees must go into such a plan. Finally, two years ago, legislation passed creating a defined-contribution plan that any state worker can join voluntarily.

AFSCME made sure workers who change

can go back to the defined-benefit option. And the union spent the past two years educating members in preparation for the defined-contribution option becoming available this year. Says AFSCME's Florida Political and Legislative Director Mark Neimeiser: “In Florida, the pay is lower than in the rest of the country, so pension plans, which are benefits paid by the employer, are in effect deferred wages, and we want to make sure they are secure.”

Outing ALEC

Activists have found that “outing” ALEC is a powerful tool. Last year, a “Not With Our Money” campaign reaching out to students on 60 college campuses, including Oberlin College and DePaul University, successfully challenged the French-based Sodexho Alliance—owner of Sodexho, the largest food service provider on American campuses. Because of the students' campaign, Sodexho withdrew its shares in the U.S. private prison business, in which it had been a 9 percent owner of the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the nation's largest private prison company. CCA is a former co-chair of the ALEC task force that generates private prison bills. And Sodexho was a fellow ALEC member.

Making the ALEC connection electrified student protesters, says campaign co-coordinator Kevin Pranis. “Everybody saw how corporations like Sodexho promote friendly images so they get everybody's business, while quietly advancing their right-wing objectives through ALEC.” Ultimately, Sodexho Alliance sold its CCA shares—and Sodexho quit ALEC. @

CRAFTING A NEW ALLIANCE

in Oregon

BY JAMES B. PARKS

Oregon's union movement demonstrated the power of solidarity in 2000 when it came together to defeat two paycheck deception initiatives. Since then, the unions have built on that solidarity—and in May, unanimously approved a New Alliance plan for stronger statewide coordination and increased participation of unions and members. The New Alliance initiative, a model for union movement reorganization, builds strength for working families. “We learned from Labor 2000 the power

of our solidarity,” says Oregon AFL-CIO President Tim Nesbitt. “It’s time to turn that big tent called Labor 2000 and the campaign structures we’ve built since then into something ongoing, permanent and powerful.” Oregon becomes the fifth state—joining North Carolina, New York, Maryland-District of Columbia and Colorado—to implement the New Alliance initiative to revamp state federations and central labor councils to better coordinate union organizing and political action.

“This is the first step up a pathway toward greater strength for our movement and for social and economic justice,” AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told participants at the Oregon convocation that launched the New Alliance.

Reaching out to all union members

Coming out of the 2000 elections, in which coordinated union efforts resulted in defeat of all but two anti-worker ballot initiatives and passage of a ballot measure enabling home care workers to join unions, leaders from several Oregon unions were determined to build on the union movement’s solidarity by further unifying the state’s union movement to promote a working families agenda through a New Alliance, Nesbitt says.

Crafted by union leaders, the heart of the plan is a new governance structure that assures all union members a place at the table. The plan includes a new state federation constitution, expanding the executive board from nine members to 24—including 15 at-large board members—and direct representation for central labor councils. A new general board, slated to meet twice



Standing strong: Laborers President Terence O'Sullivan (center) joins Oregon unionists in forming a New Alliance.

PHOTOS BY DIANE EISENREITER

a year and consisting of all labor councils as well as all affiliated unions, also gives representation and a vote to constituency groups and retirees.

"We need to have people on the general board who look like the workers," says Linda Rasmussen, representative for the Communications Workers of America. Now that the board is more diverse, "each constituency group and each of us needs to reach out to the community in which we live and work to strengthen and build coalitions," she says.

The plan also establishes special committees to address issues specific to building trades members, public-sector employees and federal and postal workers.

The new governance recognizes everyone's needs—and that's what gives it "a good chance to work," says Mark Holliday, business manager of Operating Engineers Local 701. And by ensuring everyone has a voice, the plan also "increases workplace democracy," says Bob Shiprack, executive director of the Oregon State Building Trades Council and co-chair of the New Alliance drafting committee.

Oregon union members, who successfully have faced down three attempts by anti-worker organizations to pass paycheck deception initiatives and defeated all but two of 19 anti-worker ballot measures over the past 10 years, now are in a stronger position to take on future battles—including a possible reappearance of a paycheck deception measure on this year's ballot.

To counter these anti-worker forces, the 200 delegates to the convocation adopted ambitious plans for helping new members organize, increasing political strength and building community coalitions to support working families' struggles. Spurred by a 40 percent jump in affiliations by state and local unions as a result of the New Alliance, the plan calls for the state federation to hire full-time staff to assist with affiliate organizing drives and to work on politics, legislation and mobilization.

Organizing: Key to a New Alliance

Boosting organizing and creating comprehensive voice at work strategies to support workers are key elements of all New Alliance plans. In Oregon, unions are creating a comprehensive strategy to

harness the collective economic and political strength of working families to counter attempts by employers to prevent workers from freely choosing a voice at work. The state federation will target and research industries and employers that are important strategically to affiliated unions and provide forums for organizers to share information and skills.

"We cannot organize the unorganized unless we organize ourselves," says Joe Devlaeminck, former president of AFSCME Council 75. "This is what this is all about."

The New Alliance will help Oregon's unions build on the success of such cooperative organizing efforts as the joint campaign between IUOE Local 701 and Electrical Workers Local 112, in which 160 workers at the Washington Defense Group's weapons incinerator plant in Hermiton gained a voice at work in May.

The two unions formed a joint council to fight the employer's virulent anti-union actions, which the union says included firing three workers who supported the union, canceling overtime, holding captive-audience meetings and paying employees who were off work to come in and vote.

In the days leading up to the vote, several unions, including AFSCME and the Laborers, "loaned" organizers to help with house calls, says IUOE's Holliday.

"It took a tremendous effort to overcome a fierce anti-union campaign," Holliday says. "But the workers prevailed." The New



In support: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka (right) joins CWA national representative Linda Rasmussen and SEIU Local 49 member Gaudencio Mendez at the New Alliance convocation.

Alliance played a role in the campaign because it provided a vehicle for the other unions to help out. The ongoing talks among the unions about a New Alliance plan created a bond and opened lines of communication that made it easy to ask for help, he says.

The solidarity spawned by the New Alliance was evident June 10 when delegates to the state federation convention joined SEIU members in a rally calling on Fred Meyers supermarkets to reach a fair contract with the union.

The New Alliance also will help develop a stronger political and legislative program, Oregon's union leaders say. Unions exist to make life better for all working people, and the best way to do that is by increasing workers' political strength, LIUNA President Terence O'Sullivan said in his keynote address to the May convocation.

With Labor 2000 as a model, New Alliance delegates created a permanent, year-round political program to educate union members on issues, build consensus around a legislative agenda and endorsements and hold elected candidates and elected officials accountable.

"We'll have a bigger voice. Candidates will have to listen to us," Holliday says.

"We are learning in our campaigns what we can accomplish when we share resources and work together," Nesbitt says. "We have something tangible in our hands now. It's called solidarity. It works and we don't want to lose it." @



Working together: IBEW Local 48 Business Manager Keith Edwards (left) and Operating Engineers Local 71 staff member Jim O'Connor speak in support of the New Alliance.

The 'In' Thing

Activists have been waging shop-ins, a staff-in, a movie-in—even a reggae-in—to help bring justice to workers



► When nonunion workers at the Loews Theater sought a voice at work

with Theatrical Stage Employees in the Boston suburb of Danvers, Loews management brought in union-busters to intimidate them. In response, union activists literally took the matter sitting down, staging a “movie-in” one Saturday evening in March.

Members of IATSE Local 182, which represents projectionists at Loews, and members from other unions affiliated with the North Shore Labor Council, donned “Loew\$—High Prices for Tickets, Low Wages for Workers” T-shirts for a night of movie-going and leafleting.

They were joined by a Danvers city selectman and a state representative candidate from nearby Gloucester who made a point to chat with theater employees seeking to join IATSE. “Both the workers and customers responded very well, very positively to the movie-in,” says Barry Martin, a projectionist active in Local 182. “The managers realized they couldn’t throw us out because we’d already bought our tickets. It

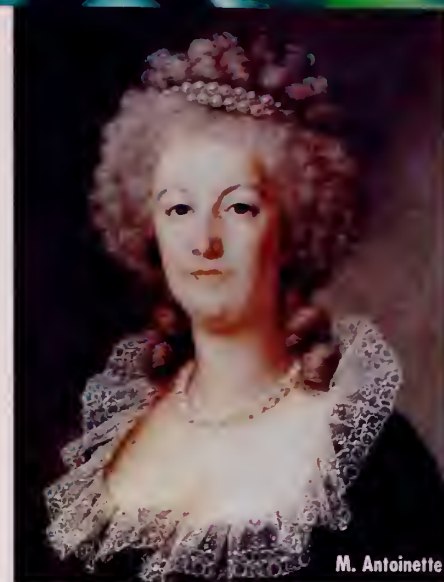
was a very productive evening, to say the least.”

► To demonstrate the type of care patients would receive

if their nursing homes weren’t so badly understaffed, workers at two West Virginia nursing homes came up with a quality solution: a “staff-in.” The SEIU District 1199WO members volunteered to work extra time so the job could be done right: “The patients loved it,” says Jeannie Holley, a certified nurse assistant at Mariner Health Care in Huntington. “Their faces would light up. Some of them can’t speak, but you could see it in their eyes.” While the patients appreciated the extra care, management wasn’t so pleased. “They didn’t want attention to short-staffing,” she says. “They didn’t want to admit it’s there.” As a result of the staff-in, reported by local newspapers and TV stations, both houses of the state legislature passed a resolution setting up an interim study on nursing home staffing levels.

► *Colorado College students campaigning for living wages*, affordable health insurance and a fair grievance procedures for Colorado College employees turned up the tunes on April 4th National Student Labor Day of Action with a campuswide “reggae-in.” Reggae music played in 100 dorm rooms, the library and even the chapel, highlighting the CC Fair Labor members’ solidarity with the college workers.

► *For grassroots activists in the Boston area*, “shop till you drop” took on a new meaning this spring, when union activists started holding “shop-ins” to show their support for employees at Shaw’s-owned Star Markets, seeking a voice at work with United Food and Commercial Workers. During a shop-in, some 30 people wearing bright yellow T-shirts emblazoned with “I support Shaw’s/Star Market Employees’ Right to Organize,” pack the aisles of a Star Market. The shop-ins have had “a big effect by helping break down the climate of fear in Star Markets and show workers they have support in the community,” says Massachusetts AFL-CIO Communications Specialist Lou Mandarin. Shop-in shoppers, who have pushed their carts through a dozen different stores, each purchased about \$10 worth of goods they later donated to local charities. @



M. Antoinette

It's Pretty, But Will It Cover My Retirement?

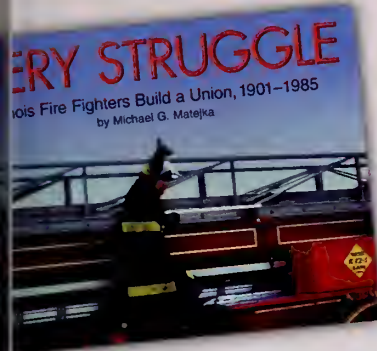
Thousands of former Enron employees still are looking for new employment, but Linda Lay, wife of former Enron chief operating officer Kenneth “Kenny Boy” Lay, has found her calling: hocking personal goods bought with Lay’s smoke-and-mirrors profits.

Stocked with surplus items from the family’s vacation homes and other properties, Lay’s store, Jus’ Stuff, includes something for everyone—from a pair of \$8,000 gilded chairs to American flags at a bargain-basement \$1.25.

“It would sort of be like Marie Antoinette opening up her house to sell her wares, hoping to save her neck,” says Charles Mercado, a part-time antiques dealer, quoted by the Associated Press.

Or, as store browser Mark Swindler told AP: “It’s just stuff all right. Stuff they got by ripping off other people.” @

PUBLICATIONS



Fiery Struggle: Illinois Fire Fighters Build a Union, 1901-1985, by Michael G. Matejka, chronicles the struggle by Illinois firefighters to

gain union recognition and collective bargaining rights. Matejka, who edits the *Livingston & McLean Counties Union News*, weaves his research into the firefighters' past with in-depth interviews with a half-dozen Illinois firefighters who describe their job training, fire department practices and union activities before passage of the state's collective bargaining law in 1985. \$20 plus \$2 shipping and handling. Illinois Labor History Society, 28 E. Jackson St., Room 1012, Chicago, Ill. 60604-2215; phone 312-663-4107; e-mail ilhs@prodigy.net.

Taking the High Road: Communities Organize for Economic Change, by David B. Reynolds, makes clear the difference between long-term, worker-friendly corporate strategies and low-road, short-term strategies that harm workers and communities. Reynolds, a leader in the living wage movement and an educator at Wayne State University's Labor Studies Center, details how unions are joining with community groups to change corporate behavior, fighting for living wage laws and aiding environmental groups in addressing quality of life issues. Reynolds provides positive strategies for creating high-road economic policies based on European examples and examines the potential of applying such efforts in the United States. \$29.95. M.E. Sharpe, www.mesharpe.com or phone 800-541-6563.

REPORTS

Introductory Report: Decent Work—Safe Work, a report by the International Labor Organization, finds some 2 million workers die annually from work-related accidents and diseases. The ILO says that 80 percent of those deaths could be prevented if employers used the best accident prevention strategies and practices that are already in place and easily available. The ILO estimates that for every death, there are another 500–2,000 injuries. For more information, visit the ILO website at www.ilo.org.

Helping Low-Wage Workers Succeed Through Innovative Union Partnerships, a new report from the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute, examines union-led initiatives in Las Vegas, Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Seattle that helped low-wage workers obtain and succeed in family-supportive jobs. Funded by the Ford Foundation, the report notes that in each case, unions reached out to the broader community, including businesses, foundations, government agencies and educational institutions to address the special training needs of low-wage workers. For the full report, visit www.workingforamerica.org or request a copy by e-mailing WAI at info@workingforamerica.org; phone: 202-974-8100.



VIDEOS

"Everyday Heroes," produced by the Machinists, documents the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center through interviews with nearly 100 workers. Funds raised from the showing and sales of the video, narrated by actor Ed Asner, will be donated to the Everyday Heroes Rescue and Recovery Workers Fund

to provide future medical care for the workers who toiled at the WTC in the days after the attack. \$19.95 per copy, including shipping and handling. For more information or to order a copy, visit the IAM website at www.iamaw.org.

"Occupation," an inspiring film documenting students' living wage campaign at Harvard University and the 21-day student sit-in at the offices of Harvard's president on behalf of the university's service workers, is now available on VHS. A portrait of effective grassroots action and solidarity building, the film has been screened on more than 60 campuses nationwide. \$30 per copy for individuals (includes postage) or \$200 for institutions. Order online from EnMasseFilms at www.enmassefilms.org. By mail, make checks payable to Phillips Brooks House Association with "PSLM film" in the memo line, and mail to Allegra Churchill, 38 Putnam Ave., No. 3, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.



WEBSIGHTINGS

www.gopetition.com/region/238/988.html—Visitors can sign a petition supporting Wal-Mart workers' efforts to win a voice at work. The site links to the Las Vegas and national Wal-Mart organizing campaigns at www.walmartworkerslv.com, where viewers can read the latest news on the Wal-Mart struggle, download fliers and other information and locate organizing campaigns by the United Food and Commercial Workers and the Teamsters at Wal-Marts and Sam's Clubs.

www.globalexchange.org/cocoa/—Global Exchange's website provides information on campaigns for workers' rights in the coffee and banana industries, and details campaigns around corporate accountability, the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In its latest effort, the nonprofit Global Exchange seeks to convince M&M/Mars to use "fair trade certified" cocoa beans to help end the use of child and slave labor in West African nations. @

CONVENTION

The **Labor Council for Latin American Advancement**, an AFL-CIO constituency group, will hold its 14th National Membership Meeting, "Un Encuentro Sindical," July 31–Aug. 4 in Dearborn, Mich. Meeting around the theme, "Un Pueblo Unido: Be Powerful, Be Heard!" union activists will participate in general sessions and workshops, help shape LCLAA's agenda for the future and discuss issues affecting organizing, political action, civil rights and Latino working families. For more information, visit LCLAA's website at www.lclaa.org.

Labor Day 2002

It's time for today's unions to

CELEBRATE AMERICA'S WORKING HEROES

Do your part to celebrate the work, the service and, the values in action of America's working men and women.

- Order **banners, stickers, T-shirts, leaflets and more!** Find it all at www.aflcio.org.
- Make your Labor Day website features part of the AFL-CIO's **Online Labor Day Festival**. E-mail your website address, and a little info about the site, to laborday@aflcio.org.
- Host **local events celebrating the workers** who make their hometowns better places to live, in big and small ways, every day. Find your **Labor Day Toolkit** at www.aflcio.org/laborday.
- Plan **Labor in the Pulpits** events by placing speakers in one, five, 10, 15 or more congregations and personally recruiting congregations. Call 202-637-5042 for copies of the **Labor in the Pulpits Labor Day 2002 Organizing Kit** and go to www.aflcio.org/pulpits/organizing for more information.
- The toolkits can help you plan events—and win attention from local media.

Make this the biggest, best Labor Day ever—the kind of celebration America's working heroes deserve.

And plan to follow up a great Labor Day with some great member mobilization to elect candidates who support good jobs and good schools, a strong Social Security program and health care all our families can afford. Get ready to tell all those candidates who want our votes this fall that they have to

HONOR AMERICA'S WORKING HEROES

TODAY'S
UNIONS *Celebrate*
America's Working Heroes
AFL-CIO LABOR DAY 2002

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

AUGUST 2002

America @work

**“We are
all workers
no matter
our age”**

ALSO INSIDE:

10 Steps to Political Success

A Voice@Work

**Facing Death, Unionists
Escape Colombia**

"ON BEHALF OF my wife, a laid-off worker at Enron, and myself, who works at Arthur Andersen, I just wanted to say thanks for your hard work in reaching a settlement with Enron for the employees. Great job!"—*Dan Darby, Houston*

SAY WHAT?

How is your union building for the future through issues-based education and get-out-the-vote actions?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afclcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

about how your union is working to ensure lawmakers support workers' freedom to gain a voice at work:

"OUR UNION AND nurses from Fletcher Allen [hospital] have met with national and local political leaders and asked them to support a free and fair [representation] election. So far, we have support from Gov. Howard Dean, Lt. Gov. Doug Racine, Rep. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont secretary of state and the state auditor. Ten state senators have signed on [as have]...38 state representatives. We are letting our elected leaders know that Vermont workers want a Voice@Work! Of course, there is no substitute for good organizing inside the hospital through strong committee building and meeting with hundreds of nurses one on one. And our community campaign is complementing the internal organizing in a way that we believe will ultimately help build the strongest kind of union."—*Phil Fiermonte, United Professions of Vermont/AFT*

"[AS A WORLDCOM employee], I may be out of 22 weeks of severance I am due [when] the company goes bankrupt....The company is taking its sweet time in even getting the first checks going....I am currently very close to completing an MBA [and] totally believe that corporate America is out of control and workers need protection....Where I once did not feel there was need for union membership in corporate America, my opinion has changed."—*Danny J. Heinrich, Littleton, Colo.*

"EVEN THOUGH I'M not a member of your union, I was wondering if you have ever pointed out Labor Ready's work ethics and/or practices?....To get work through Labor Ready, you had better be a favorite when you sign its list of workers, as you may not get a job that day. This is unfair to the workers who are down on their luck, and very wrong....Please do not use my name....They would fire me if they knew that I even wrote you all."—*Name, location, withheld by request*

Editor's note: The AFL-CIO and its affiliate unions have been working to highlight Labor Ready's practices. The AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department recently called for Labor Ready investors to demand Labor Ready's management team step down, based on the company's own report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, in which Labor Ready acknowledges it is at risk for "health and safety, wage and hour" and other claims. Also see the February 2001 America@work for an in-depth look at Labor Ready.

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.



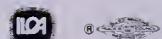
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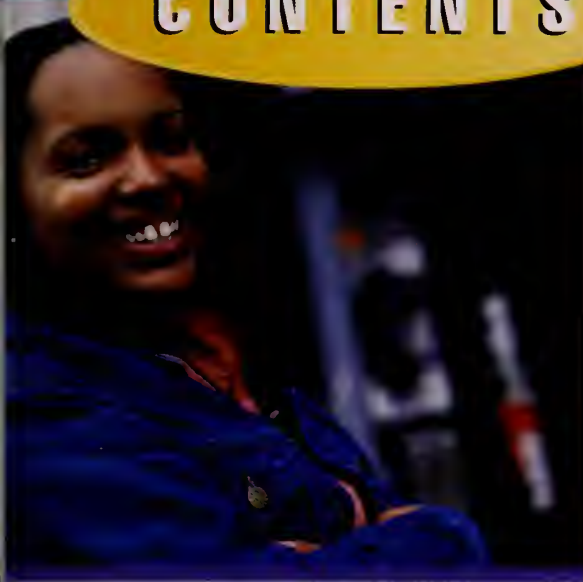
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CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

Taste of victory
No more business as usual
Lawmakers run, but can't hide

20 LIKE IT IS

High stakes in nurse staffing

21 OUT THERE

Union-busting is disgusting
All the news that's not union
Teachers and hip-hop stars

22 TOOLBOX

Unions make the difference

23 HOMEPAGE

Exhibit: "I Am A Man" photo display at the AFL-CIO

Conference: The Alliance for Retired Americans holds its first national meeting

Publication: *Students Against Sweatshops*

Music: "Solidarity: It Can't Be Beat"

Event: "Not In Our Town" week, Sept. 11-17

8

WE ARE ALL WORKERS, NO MATTER OUR AGE

Union leaders are launching initiatives to ensure the union movement hears and responds to young workers' unique concerns—and to channel their skills and energy to build the next generation of activists

12

10 STEPS TO POLITICAL SUCCESS

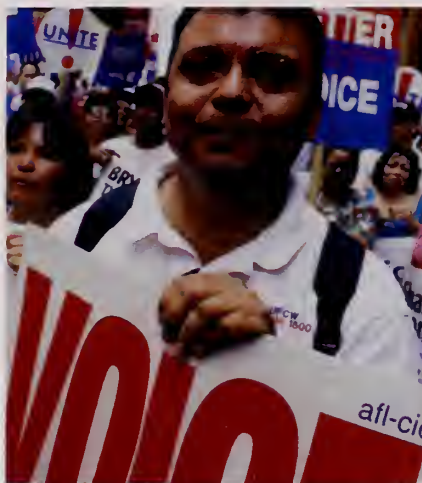
Working families and their unions are using the AFL-CIO's 10-point program for effective political action to make the difference in the most competitive and critical Senate races



ADAM GREEN

15

A VOICE@WORK



ANDREW UCHTENSTEIN

Union activists across the nation took part in *Voice@Work Month* throughout June, highlighting the resistance workers face when seeking a voice at work, mobilizing community allies and laying the groundwork for legal reform to ensure respect for workers' rights

19

FACING DEATH, UNIONISTS ESCAPE COLOMBIA

Colombian trade unionists in residence at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies share their experiences in a country where hundreds of union leaders have been killed in the past year



JAMES PARKS

Cover: David Hill

Unions are reaching out to young workers like CWA member Rhonda Thomas



JAY MALIN

No More Business As Usual

Stop the greed: Flanked by Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), laid-off WorldCom employee Cara Alcantar urged lawmakers on Capitol Hill to hold corporations accountable.

On July 30, union activists held a major “No More Business As Usual” rally on Wall Street in New York City to demand Congress enact meaningful corporate reforms that protect shareholder value, good jobs and working families’ retirement security.

Such reforms will come too late for workers like laid-off WorldCom employee Cara Alcantar and laid-off Enron Corp. employee Deborah Perotta, who spoke out at a July 9 press conference in Washington, D.C.

“I’ve read that the people in the House of Representatives who oppose these reforms say that businesses need more flexibility, not more laws,” says Alcantar. “But the flexibility that exists now is proven to allow billions of dollars to bleed out of essentially every American’s pocketbook.”

WorldCom filed for nearly \$4 billion in bankruptcy protection in July, the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history. The Senate unanimously passed a measure sponsored by Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) that sets up a new oversight body for the accounting industry, bars accounting

firms from providing many consulting services to publicly traded companies they also audit and increases penalties for corporate fraud. The House passed a weaker measure.

Union activists aren’t waiting for Congress to act. Building on “No More Business as Usual” town hall meetings in June, activists are holding grassroots accountability events in key congressional districts over Labor Day and through the November elections. And to help the thousands of workers nationwide left jobless as a result of corporate greed, the AFL-CIO launched a new website—www.laidoffworkers.org—that provides information for surviving lay-offs. @

Teamsters Reach Agreement with UPS

While many workers are faced with job loss and cuts in health care and pensions, the Teamsters showed that solidarity works by reaching a tentative agreement with United Parcel Service (UPS) July 16, the union calls the best contract in UPS history.

“When workers are mobi-

Lawmakers Run BUT CAN'T HIDE

Although the president’s hand-picked Social Security privatization commission released privatization plans in December, and President George W. Bush and many congressional Republicans ran on platforms to privatize Social Security, this fall’s GOP candidates have been advised to keep the privatization plan quiet until after the November elections, according to campaign documents published by *The Washington Post* this spring.

But union members and their allies are making sure voters know which lawmakers and candidates support strengthening Social Security and which support privatizing it. Beginning in July, activists staged rallies, held press conferences and marched in demonstrations, urging officeholders and candidates to sign a pledge rejecting Social Security privatization and launching a pledge drive that will continue through the November elections.

During the July 4 congressional recess, activists visited lawmakers in three dozen cities, including Louisville, Ky., where more than 100 union retirees, youth activists and others traveled to the federal building that houses the offices of Sens. Mitch McConnell (R) and Jim Bunning (R) and Rep. Anne Northup (R). Kentucky State AFL-CIO President Bill Londrigan says the group was met by federal security guards who kept a close eye on them throughout their visit. After that trio of lawmakers declined to sign, the group traveled to the campaign offices of Senate candidate Lois Combs Weinberg (D) and congressional hopeful Jack Conway (D), where Londrigan says they were not greeted by security guards but with signatures for the pledge.

To download a copy of the pledge and to learn more, visit www.aflcio.org. To see how privatizing Social Security would affect your state, click on http://www.aflcio.org/socialsecurity/news_bushss_state.htm. @



ROADIE HICKMAN

Social Security works: More than 100 activists denouncing Bush’s plan to privatize Social Security marched outside a downtown Cleveland auditorium where Bush made a July appearance.

and benefit increases of \$5 an hour for full-time workers over the term of the contract and \$6 an hour for part-timers, and adds 20,000 new full-time union jobs. Half of the new jobs will come from new hires and the rest from the conversion of jobs currently subcontracted.

The tentative agreement covers 210,000 employees. The previous contract was set to expire July 31. @



Longshore Workers Rally for Justice

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union are engaged in a historic struggle with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), fighting for their livelihood in ongoing contract talks.

ILWU President James Spinoza and Teamsters President James P. Hoffa, whose members transport cargo after it has been unloaded from ships by ILWU members, told a crowd of 500 in Oakland, Calif., the two unions will stand together and fight for a fair contract.

The Teamsters have joined with the ILWU and the Longshoremen in a coalition to organize and make ports wall-to-wall union, and to provide mutual aid in times of struggle.

Solidarity: At a June rally, Teamsters President James P. Hoffa and ILWU President James Spinoza join forces in Longshore Workers' fight for a fair contract.

The ILWU is aiding IBT's effort to organize port truckers who currently are classified as independent owner-operators, and who cannot legally join a union under that classification. The Longshoremen joined the coalition at ports on the East and Gulf Coasts.

The top issue for the ILWU is job security—the PMA is seeking to use new technology to take away good-paying union jobs. Although the contract, which covers 10,500 workers, expired July 1, as of the America@work press date, the union is negotiating under day-to-day extensions during the talks. Last year the ILWU members handled \$260 billion worth of cargo at 29 major West Coast ports. @

Workplace AIDS Education

Unions around the world have stepped up efforts to encourage governments, businesses and unions to educate workers at the workplace as part of the fight against HIV/AIDS—which affects more than 40 million people worldwide, according to the United Nations.

During the XIV International AIDS Conference in July, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) called on governments to make the new ILO Code of Practice for HIV/AIDS a central tool for solutions worldwide. The code details methods to engage the entire workplace to cooperate in dealing with HIV/AIDS and using the workplace as a forum for education and change.

For more information on the ILO Code of Practice, click on www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/code/codemain. @

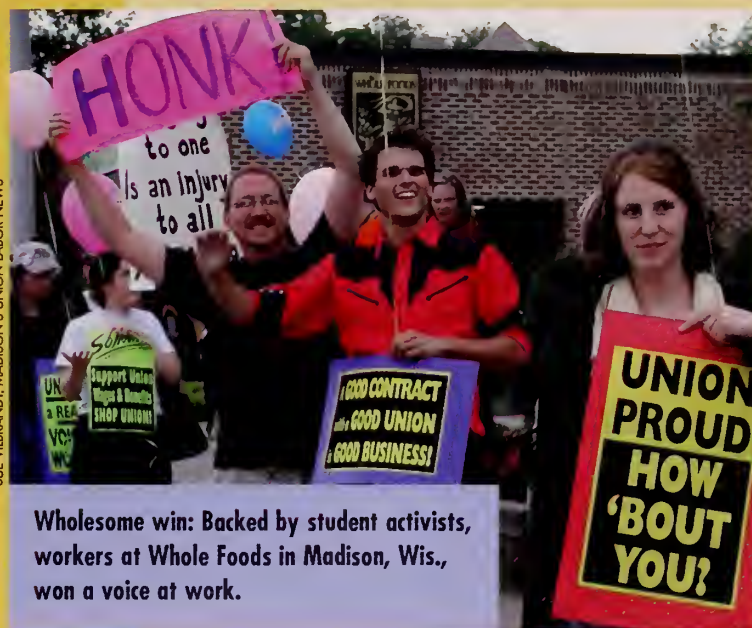
SPOTLIGHT

Taste of Victory

Harnessing the passion for social justice in a college town with a proud union history, 125 retail workers at Whole Foods Market in Madison, Wis., won a voice on the job with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1444 July 14.

"Whole Foods prides itself on being a progressive company with a unique set of values," says organizing committee member Jeremy Plague, a dairy buyer at the store. "But our voices are ignored and our opinions disregarded." A flashpoint came when managers imposed a dress code—banning face piercing, dyed hair and political buttons—without first getting workers' input, says Debbie Rasmussen, who works at the juice bar.

Madison is home of the University of Wisconsin's flagship campus, where students boast a long history of social justice activism, most recently launching a campaign to improve conditions at overseas sweatshops where campus logo apparel is made. In 1999, student anti-sweatshop activists at Madison were among the first in the nation to win a strong code of conduct governing the purchase of apparel.



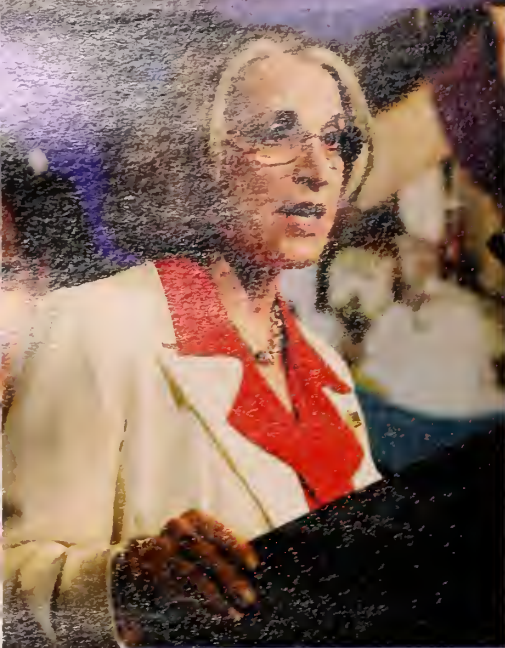
Wholesome win: Backed by student activists, workers at Whole Foods in Madison, Wis., won a voice at work.

A key member of the Whole Foods organizing committee was involved in that campaign.

"A whole new generation of union organizers is beginning to emerge," says David Newby, president of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO.

"The election is only the first step," says South Central Federation of Labor President Jim Cavanaugh. "There will be the long process of negotiating a first contract," he says, pledging area union members' continuing support for the Whole Foods workers.

Activists from the campus Student Labor Action Coalition joined union members from the South Central Federation of Labor and the state federation for rallies at the store, encouraging the workers to stand strong amid the company's anti-union campaign. @



Standing firm: AFT President Sandra Feldman vows the union will fight efforts to enact voucher legislation.

AFT Tackles Vouchers, Teacher Salaries

AFT leaders are vowing to press for quality education for all students following the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision allowing some school voucher programs, which siphon funds from public schools to private ones. "If this decision brings new efforts to enact voucher legislation, we will fight these efforts," says AFT President Sandra Feldman.

Also this summer, the union published its annual teacher salary survey in July, which shows the average starting salary

for teachers in the 2000–01 school year was up 4.4 percent from the previous year, while average teacher pay overall went up only 3.4 percent in the same period—one of the smallest increases in 40 years. Improving teachers' starting salaries will attract more professionals, but near-stagnant wages for veteran educators will make retaining them difficult, AFT leaders say.

The full survey is available at www.aft.org/research/salary.

In another recent report, AFT found that charter schools—less regulated, publicly funded schools operated by community groups, private businesses or groups of educators and parents—are failing to fulfill their promise of boosting student achievement and bringing innovation to classrooms. *Do Charter Schools Measure Up?* The *Charter School Experiment After 10 Years* is available at www.aft.org/edissues/downloads/charterreport02.pdf.

AFT leaders released both studies at their convention in Las Vegas July 15–18. @

Labor College Education Pays Off

Before graduating from the National Labor College in 1999, Ruth Marlin wrote her senior paper on the need for the federal government to better prepare for attrition among air traffic controllers. The General Accounting Office, when it began to review the impact of pending retirements among controllers, met with Marlin several times to discuss her paper and its conclusions. The final GAO report included much of her research.

Marlin received her master's degree in 2001 and is now executive vice president of the Air Traffic Controllers.

Marlin's success can be an inspiration to the most recent graduates of the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. Ninety-seven union activists received bachelor of arts degrees in commencement ceremonies June 29. Another 17 received master of arts degrees in a joint program between the college and the University of Baltimore.

The AFL-CIO and affiliate unions launched the National Labor College in 1997 to meet the educational needs of working men and women. The curriculum emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving, while also providing the organizing, collective bargaining and leadership skills needed to build stronger unions, develop new union strategies and improve living standards and working conditions for working families. @



Profile in Courage

A 48-year member of Bricklayers Local 21, Dean Koldenhoven (third from left) recently received a 2002 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage award as Caroline Kennedy and Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) took part. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan (second from left) also received an award. Koldenhoven (R), the former mayor of Palos Heights, Ill., was honored for his strong public stand in support of the Islamic community—an action that likely cost him his office in his 2001 bid for re-election. The awards are presented annually to elected officials who have followed what they think is the correct course of action in the face of opposition.

CASH FOR COMMUTING

Union members can save commuting cash through a new tax-free transit benefit—and contract negotiations are a good time to approach employers about taking part, say leaders of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Each employee is eligible to receive up to \$100 per month, or up to \$1,200 per year, in public transportation funds that cover buses, trains, ferries and van pools.

"I would encourage local unions across the country to include this benefit as one of their bargaining priorities," says ATU International President Jim La Sala. "It's a good deal for workers and their employers, who will also gain from the tax benefits provided under this program."

To find out how to sign up, call your local mass transit agency or contact Jeff Rosenberg, ATU Legislative Counsel, at 202-537-1645. For more information about the transit benefit, visit the ATU web site at www.atu.org, which includes a link to a transit benefits tool kit. @

UNIONS WORK FOR CONTRACEPTIVE EQUITY

In efforts to achieve contraceptive equity in health coverage, the AFL-CIO constituency group the Coalition of Labor Union Women created a contraceptive equity kit, available to union leaders by calling 202-223-8360, ext. 4, or clicking on www.cluw.org/contraceptive. In December, delegates to the AFL-CIO convention passed a CLUW-backed resolution supporting contraceptive equity. @



...camera.... Young actors from the Solidarity Kids Theater joined union activists at annual arts and organizing conferences at the George Meany Center.

Activists Weave Arts into Unions

More than 100 union artists, organizers and labor educators tapped the union movement's cultural heritage in June for new strategies to educate, organize and mobilize through songs, poetry, theater, posters, cartoons, films, websites and other media.

Activists traveled to the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md., to take part in the 24th annual Great Labor Arts Exchange and the Conference on Creative Organizing, sponsored by the Meany Center and the Labor Heritage Foundation. The group also took time

off from workshops to join an informational picket at the Willard Hotel's Interpark garage in Washington, D.C., where the parking attendants are seeking a voice at work with Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 27.

Young actors from the Solidarity Kids Theater in Minnesota performed for the group and received "tremendous encouragement [while] seeing what labor culture is about from the participants in the Arts Exchange," says Howard Kling, director of the Kids Theater, which is sponsored in part by the Postal Workers.

For information on next year's arts conference, call the Labor Heritage Foundation at 202-974-8040 or e-mail info@laborheritage.org. @

Fast Track Nears Passage

The U.S. House of Representatives rushed to vote on flawed Fast Track legislation before leaving for a month-long recess July 26. At press, the U.S. Senate was expected to pass the bill before adjourning for the August recess.

The House vote came after a conference to reconcile House and Senate Fast Track bills. The final package weakened or removed the few provisions in the Senate Fast Track bill that would have helped displaced U.S. workers retain affordable health insurance and some income support. The toothless workers' rights and environmental provisions from bills previously approved by the House in December and the Senate in May were further

weakened in the conference bill. Senate language extending the definition of core workers' rights to include nondiscrimination was stripped out of the conference bill.

The Bush administration pressed hard for a swift vote before Congress adjourned for its August recess—giving House lawmakers little time to study the changes in the bill. The deal was completed shortly before midnight July 25 and was expected to be voted on the following day in the House.

Fast Track trade authority will enable the president to negotiate trade deals, but prevents Congress from improving or rejecting harmful provisions by allowing only "yes" or "no" votes on entire trade packages. @

OUT FRONT

Ultimate greed corrupts absolutely. And every one of America's workers is imperiled by the ultimate greed that resulted in Enron, WorldCom and the recent stock market plunges.

In the crazy "Me Generation" of the 1980s, America was told we could have it all if we just ceded unfettered command of our economy and our futures to business.

Remember those years—when Public Enemy No. 1 was a single mother supporting her children with a meager welfare check? Newt Gingrich's Contract on America years told us we would all prosper if we could just get government—and its regulations—off our backs.

Then, when it seemed that any upstart could become a millionaire with a dot-com launch, we got the message that if we were struggling personally in the "bubble" economy, well, something was wrong with us, not with the system.

America's workers have been fleeced. We've been robbed of jobs and retirement security and health care by a nonstop, two-decade conservative drumbeat echoing the message: Government regulation is bad, deregulation is good—and if you can't play the game you deserve to be left behind.

Brothers and sisters, it is time for America's workers to be un-fleeced—and that job is up to us.

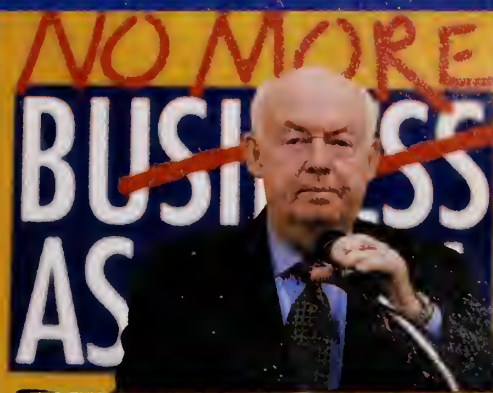
We have to seize this moment. When working families open the quarterly statements that show how much their retirement savings and their sons' and daughters' college accounts have lost to corporate executives' book-cooking, we have to make sure they know they are the victims of corporate greed—ultimate greed. When working men and women see they will have to work into their late sixties and seventies, let's remind them that corporate executives are enjoying tens of millions of dollars in outrageous compensation packages and retention bonuses they pillaged from companies headed into bankruptcy.

When employees discarded from WorldCom wonder how to get health care without jobs or insurance, we have to stand with them and demand that they get the severance packages their employee handbooks promised at minimum, as we won in a historic bankruptcy court victory for Enron workers.

We have to stand united as our representatives in Congress debate whether to enact meaningful corporate and accounting reforms—or to please big-dollar corporate sponsors while appeasing voters with lip service and no teeth. And we have to vote united in the fall congressional elections, letting incumbents and challengers alike know that when it comes to protecting working families, we *do not forget*.

Every time our members open 401(k) statements or lose sleep worrying about their jobs and retirement, and every time a crooked corporate executive opens the daily newspaper, they should see these words: No More Business As Usual! @

Ultimate Greed



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

We are All Workers, No Matter Our Age

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

In mapping out his vision for the Federation of Labor Youth (FLY), a project of the Harris County (Texas) Central Labor Council, Miles Rodriguez describes it as a tool for recruiting students, young working people and children of union members. "We're going to help kids get jobs and create unions at their jobs. We'll have classes on workers' rights and political action," says Rodriguez, 21, an intern at the labor council. "Sooner or later, every labor council and each international union is going to have to do this," says Rodriguez, who this year helped launch FLY—which also is the 20-something slang for "cool," "awesome" or "groovy." As college students are becoming increasingly important allies to workers, unions are reaching out to young workers—some who have gone to college, many who have not—to engage them more fully in improving their own workplaces. Like the Harris County labor council, union leaders and activists across the country are launching initiatives to ensure the union movement hears and responds to young workers' unique concerns—and to channel their skills and energy to build the next generation of activists.



“Kids work.” Their parents work. They see themselves as exploited. They want a better way than to be robbed at work.”

—Miles Rodriguez, intern, Harris County (Texas) Central Labor Council

If the first union experience for a young worker is great, that lasts a lifetime,” says Stuart Tannock, a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley’s school of education and author of *Youth at Work: The Unionized Fast-Food and Grocery Workplace*. “It would build union strength and that would benefit all workers.”

Young union members, like workers of all ages, benefit from winning a voice on the job. While only 38 percent of young nonunion workers earn more than \$20,000 a year, 70 percent of those with a voice on the job do, according to a survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates Inc., for a 1999 AFL-CIO report, *High Hopes, Little Trust*. Forty percent of young nonunion workers have employer-provided health insurance, compared with 76 percent of young union workers. Young workers are open to the union message: 55 percent believe union members have more economic security than nonunion members, according to the report. About 54 percent of young workers in 1999 said

they would vote for a union, up from about 48 percent in 1997. Yet workers between ages 16 and 34 are about half as likely to belong to unions as their older counterparts (ages 35 to 54), according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Given this reality, says Tannock, “it is strategically important for the labor movement to address young workers’ issues.”

For decades, building and construction trades unions have been recruiting and involving young members through rigorous apprenticeship programs in which future electricians, welders, ironworkers, roofers, drywallers and others learn skills to build high-quality homes, bridges, schools and office buildings. The Bricklayers union, for example, is injecting some fun into the training by hosting a unionwide apprentice contest next year, with finalists in brick, stone, tile, marble,

cement and plaster work slated to compete at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. Painters and Allied Trades runs a similar competition for apprentice dry-wallers, painters, glazers and other budding craftspeople. Increasingly, these unions also are mobilizing apprentices in political action and organizing, providing them a way to contribute to the union movement’s efforts to improve the lives of all working families.

Public employee and service unions also are implementing strategies to address young workers’ desire for the skills that will help them be successful in their careers and for taking action to improve their jobs and lives.

Leaders of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers/AFT Local 59 are focusing on the needs of young union members by working to retain new teachers—many of whom



"The union movement
is the best place to work for social change."

—Jeremy Edwards, ILWU Local 5, Evergreen, Wash.

are in their 20s—and engage them in the union's political mobilization efforts. The local works with the school district to provide a mentor for each new teacher and hosts a celebration when the fledgling educators receive tenure. "Our Gen-Xers expect mentoring and want a career ladder," says Local 59 President Louise Sundin. "If they don't get those things, they say, 'I'm outta here.'" Their efforts are working: Teacher turnover nationwide over the first five years of the program is 50 percent—in Minneapolis, it is only 15 percent.

To involve young members in political action, the local union designs fun events and asks for time commitments in manageable two-hour chunks. During the campaign for a tax levy to fund smaller class size in November 2000, the union engaged young members by mobilizing them to rake leaves for seniors and pack the fallen foliage in bright yellow "Vote Yes for Kids!" bags that ultimately lined neighborhood streets. Young members also

donned the yellow message bags the morning of the election, standing on freeway overpasses, while their colleagues took part in a midnight flier drop the previous night, reminding voters to go to the polls. Voters passed the measure with 73 percent of the vote.

"Young workers have a sense of purpose and commitment," says Sundin. "We should tailor our appeals around causes, and unions are a cause," she says. When Sundin gives presentations to union leaders about Local 59's success in engaging young members, she urges them to shift away from a union culture that reserves leadership positions solely for more senior union members and instead tap into young members' energy and unique skills—such as their ability to use new technology and employ popular culture. "We have to swallow hard and help young workers break into leadership roles sooner than we may be comfortable with," says Sundin.

Young SEIU members have conveyed that message to their leaders. SEIU leaders have held small group meetings with young members to hear their concerns and ideas for building involvement among their peers. "Young members want their skills and energy to be respected and put to use," says SEIU President Andrew Stern. Young leaders within the union are shaping a training and development program based on the input they heard. The union also is looking for new ways to work together with students on issues of common concern. "Cultivating the next generation of leaders to carry on our fight for good jobs, living wages and quality health care is critical to our future," says Stern.

Double-shifting: work and school

Twenty-five-year-old Jeremy Edwards is proud of his contributions as a cook at the Evergreen State College cafeteria in Olympia, Wash. Before graduating in June, he also studied labor history full-time at the college. At work, cafeteria managers thought so little of their employees they instituted a mandatory name tag policy rather than learn their names. Fed up with the lack of respect, Edwards and his colleagues helped launch a food service union in January 2001 with Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 5. "I was pessimistic, but when I saw the alternative, I got really hopeful," he says. "The union movement is the best place to work for social change."

On many college campuses, young people often are simultaneously students and workers. They increasingly are conscious of these dual roles and are turning to unions for a voice on the job. Some are employed by the universities at which they study, such as graduate teaching assistants, who increasingly are forming unions. Other student employees are following suit: In February, nearly 400 undergraduate dormitory monitors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst made history when they became the first such workers to vote for a union. To protest university President William Bulger's adamant refusal to bargain with the union, more than 30 of the dorm workers—the new members of UAW Local 2322—were arrested at a May rally outside Bulger's office during a mobilization with the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

Student-workers also are putting in a

JIM LEVITT



"I work

full-time and go to computer training school full-time, using the tuition reimbursement that my union won in the 2000 contract with Verizon. More unions should do that. We are all workers, no matter our age."

—Rhonda Thomas, customer service representative,
CWA Local 2336, Washington, D.C.

(especially important in high-turnover jobs). A comprehensive union campaign to improve young workers' lives also should include organizing students around working conditions, holding drives to reduce college tuition and engaging in political mobilization for living wages, strong health and safety rules and fairness for temporary and part-time workers. "Many union leaders will need to be pushed to look beyond their older, adult core membership in order to agitate on behalf of workers of all ages and life stages," say the Berkeley researchers.

Union leaders are hearing that message. In Houston, Miles Rodriguez is hard at work planning for a September conference for young, new union members between 17 and 30. The one-day event will offer

workshops on why workers need unions, public speaking skills and holding one-on-one meetings with workers.

Together with unions such as AFT and SEIU, the work of the Harris County labor council reflects union leaders' growing awareness of reaching out to the new generation of workers. "This is a way to get young people involved in their unions," says Rodriguez, "and a way to train leadership for the future." @

The AFL-CIO Organizing Institute this month is hosting a special three-day training for union members younger than 30 to address the desires of many affiliates to involve their younger members. Contact the OI at www.aflcio.org/orginst/index.

"double shift" of studies and paid work in part-time, low-wage, nonunion jobs off campus. Ever-rising tuition payments and paltry wages combine to create severe economic pressures. "This group of young workers is oriented toward education and they do not expect to stay in the industries they are in," says *Youth at Work* author Tannock. They often face low pay, abusive managers, sexual harassment, racial discrimination and scheduling insecurities on the job, Tannock and co-author Sara Flocks found in a recent study for the University of California, Berkeley's Young Worker Project. "Policies and programs that address only the needs of young people as students but not as workers are insufficient and short-sighted," they conclude. Lousy working conditions are an obstacle to further education. The combination of low pay and rising tuition means young people will spend more time "toiling in the basement of the local labor market," they say.

Union leaders must come together with these young workers to help them win a voice on the job, say Tannock and Flocks. When negotiating contracts, union leaders need to listen to the voices of young workers who seek tuition assistance, schedules that allow them to take the classes they need, lower union initiation fees and shorter lag time for getting benefits



"Unions should

have more political and economic education and deal with workplace issues unique to young workers. People will feel a sense of justice and that's what will make them feel connected to their union."

—Ryan Murphy, flight attendant, AFA member, San Francisco

THOR SWIFT

10 Steps to Political Success

BY MIKE HALL

In June, Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) succinctly summed up the importance of this fall's off-year elections, especially the 33 Senate races that will determine control of the U.S. Senate.

"One senator can make a difference, a huge difference. In the Senate, a net pick-up of one, coupled with [Vice President] Dick Cheney's vote, and we're back in the majority. We've got great opportunities to pick up Senate seats in South Dakota, in Minnesota and in Missouri," Lott said during the annual legislative conference of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), an anti-union construction contractors' organization in Washington, D.C.

Currently, the Senate is nearly evenly split, 50 Democrats, 49 Republicans and one Independent. One vote can make a big difference—like the difference between a Medicare prescription drug bill that helps seniors pay for their needed prescriptions or legislation that allows pharmaceutical giants to continue to reap massive profits by bleeding retirees.

House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Texas), also speaking to the anti-working family builders and contractors, described in one word the key to winning the off-year elections, with their traditionally lower turnout: people.

"Candidates get elected when their supporters succeed in turning out all of their voters.... The strongest grassroots effort is always more successful in closely contested races," DeLay said.

In fact, DeLay told the group it should pattern its election efforts after the union movement's successful political mobilization strategies that have equipped working families and their unions to become influential election players. "Labor unions have done a better job... in putting more volunteers on the ground, where they're needed most, particularly in competitive races," he said.



On the bandwagon: Sheila Wellstone joins husband Sen. Paul Wellstone, who is receiving critical multiunion support for re-election.

Three of the most competitive and critical Senate races where working families and their unions are mobilizing to make a difference—using the AFL-CIO's proven 10-point program for effective political action

(see box, page 14)—are the same races in which Lott, DeLay and their allies such as the contractors' group are pouring their resources: Minnesota, Missouri and South Dakota.

Minnesota: Mobilizing members

"Our members are very in tune about how important this election is. They are concerned about health care, pensions, jobs, education," says Tim Loverson, president of Communications Workers of America Local 7200.

Loverson says union members know it's critical they re-elect their senior senator, Paul Wellstone (D), who earned a perfect 100 percent mark on the AFL-CIO Senate scorecard on working family issues last year. While Wellstone cast his ballot for a strong Medicare prescription drug benefit and backed a bill strengthening prevailing wage laws for construction workers, his opponent, Norm Coleman (R), former mayor of St. Paul, cut health care coverage for city retirees and opposed a living wage ordinance while in office.

As demonstrated in the union movement's highly successful Labor '98 and Labor 2000 efforts, one of the first steps in running a successful election mobilization is setting up a worksite strategy to engage and educate union members about the issues that affect them.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO and its affiliates launched their worksite recruitment effort in the early spring and have more than 200 worksite and local union coordinators, says state federation President Ray Waldron. "And that's just about halfway there."

By June, union leaders already had conducted several training sessions, with more scheduled, so union volunteer coordinators can learn about voter registration, talking with co-workers about the issues and successful get-out-the-vote techniques.

"I'm trying to get a lot of people on the bandwagon, get them motivated to get involved," says first-time coordinator Ed Webber, a Bloomington, Minn., school bus driver and SEIU Local 284 member.

Webber is just one of more than 100 member political organizers (MPOs) SEIU Local 284 Executive Director Shane Allers plans to field from among the 9,000-member school employee local union.

"We're building our MPOs now, going out and visiting the buildings. Even with school out, we can still talk to the custodians and secretaries there through the summer and use our automated phone banks to reach the cooks, bus drivers and other workers before school starts again."

One of the first missions CWA's Loverson took on was comparing the accuracy of the local's voter registration rolls with similar lists in the secretary of state's office. Checking the state registration documents, which are available to the public, also enabled Loverson to determine how many registered voters took part in the 2000 elections so the union could set get-out-the-vote targets along with registration goals.

Although Loverson says CWA Local 7200, which represents more than 2,700 members, has a 79 percent voter registration rate, that high figure doesn't stop Loverson from setting his sights even higher.

"Our local goal is to get to 100 percent. We have a drive going to hit all the garages [where the outside technicians meet before hitting the road each day] and set up tables in the bigger offices," he says.

Missouri: Communicating with members

Missouri AFL-CIO President Hugh McVey says the Show-Me State's unions know they are in for a hard fight to re-elect Sen. Jean Carnahan (D), who is running against one of President George W. Bush's hand-picked favorites, former Rep. Jim Talent (R).

"Bush has already been here stumping for him and Talent has already done two campaign mailings that are probably going to every voter, regardless of party—because I've had them sent to my house," he says.

The Missouri AFL-CIO already has countered by mailing two working family fliers to union members and is planning several more mailings to the more than 300,000 union households in the state. Frequent and regular communication with union voters about issues and the importance of staying politically active is one of the cornerstones of the AFL-CIO's 10-point political program.

Through the AFL-CIO Working Family Toolkit, unions now also have access to issues fliers that can be customized by congressional district and downloaded or printed. Local unions "are thrilled" they quickly can access designed fliers, making it easier to contact all union members at their worksites about the issues, says Bob Kelley, president of the Greater St. Louis Labor Council. "The jobsite contacts and those handbills are the most effective way of communicating."

Communicating with members is just the beginning. The state's union movement now



Hot support: South Dakota working families are working to re-elect Sen. Tim Johnson (D), a candidate with a proven pro-worker record.

is focusing on get-out-the-vote mobilization, especially in the St. Louis area, home to some 65 percent of Missouri union members.

"We've had initial meetings with all the affiliates and they've signed on to participate and work the 10 points," says Kelley, adding that 90 local unions representing 175,000 members belong to the council.

At the same time, the council ensured that a unique group of Labor Clubs formed decades ago by union members for social, union and political activities received lists of working people in their areas so they can support the door-knocking efforts.

Kelley says the locals also are energized by a voter registration competition the labor council proposed this year as the St. Louis unions began mapping out their election strategies. Locals that increase registration by the largest numbers and highest percentages will be honored at the council's annual COPE dinner in September.

This month, Missouri working family activists will get a chance to test their get-out-the-vote strategy with a primary. While neither Senate candidate faces serious opposition, races for the U.S. House and state legislature will be contested.

"The weekend before the primary, we're going to have 1,000 people on the streets to test the system and by November, we'll have thousands more ready for the general election," Kelley says.

The 10-Point Program

- 1 Recruit a key contact at each local and worksite.
- 2 Distribute leaflets at all union worksites.
- 3 Maximize contact through union publications.
- 4 Maximize communication from local presidents and business agents.
- 5 Maximize impact of union phone calls.
- 6 Update locals' membership lists.
- 7 Increase registration by 10 percent.
- 8 Conduct massive get-out-the-vote effort.
- 9 Build rapid response network in the workplace.
- 10 Link politics to organizing.

South Dakota: One-on-one contact in a wide-open state

South Dakota is not a heavily unionized state. But its more than 10,000 union members and the voters who share their households could mean the difference in what political experts think will be a hotly contested race for Senate between Sen. Tim Johnson (D) and three-term Rep. John Thune (R)—an election in which even a single large union household could call the winner.

In his six years in the Senate, Johnson has earned an AFL-CIO voting record of 85 percent on working family issues, while Thune, as U.S. representative during those years, backed working family issues just 14 percent of the time, including a vote to repeal the nation's first ergonomics standard that addressed repetitive strain injuries on the job.

In South Dakota, where the distance between cities and towns presents a unique challenge to union political leaders and activists, AFSCME Council 59 Executive Director Paul Aylward says it's necessary to focus on mail messages, regular union meetings and newsletters. AFSCME's more than 700 members include city employees, State Highway Administration workers and two units of school custodians.

"We're using our steward structure and already have gotten one flier on health care out," he explains.

The state's unions and the South Dakota State Federation of Labor set up three zones where union members are most concentrated.

So far, more than 60 worksite and local union coordinators have helped mobilize their members, says Gil Koetzle, state federation president.

"We held kick-off meetings in each of our three zones and asked the local presidents and business agents to find key people to help distribute the workplace fliers and make personal contact. We won't have somebody at every worksite, some of our worksites might have just seven or eight, but there are people who have volunteered to take care of say half a dozen, stay in touch, deliver the fliers, encourage folks to register if they haven't and vote on Election Day," he says.

With the state's wide-open spaces (100,000-acre ranches are not uncommon in the western part of the state), telephone contact is a key way to deliver the message.



BRUCE INNOCENTI

"We've got to elect people who care about our issues and hold them accountable," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee (above).

The state federation holds regular call sessions with the coordinators, who have set the goal of making at least two phone contacts with every union member in the worksites or locals they are working with to achieve good union member-to-union member contact.

All three Senate races will go down to the wire—and all three pit respected, incumbent senators who have solid working family voting records against Big Business favorites and Bush administration-backed candidates with long track records of attacking unions and their members and of opposing a real working family agenda.

"If we want to protect Social Security and Medicare, win a real Patients' Bill of Rights, make prescription drugs more affordable, then we've got to elect people who care about our issues and hold them accountable," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, chairman of the AFL-CIO Executive Council Political Committee.

"When people understand the distinction between the candidates and see it really is in their and their families' self-interest to elect them, they are going to be motivated for these Senate races," predicts Minnesota's Allers. @

To download issues fliers that can be customized by congressional district, visit www.workingfamiilestoolkit.com.



Mobilizing community allies and laying the groundwork for legal reform to ensure respect for workers' rights, union activists across the nation took part in *Voice@Work Month* throughout June, highlighting the resistance workers face when seeking a voice at work

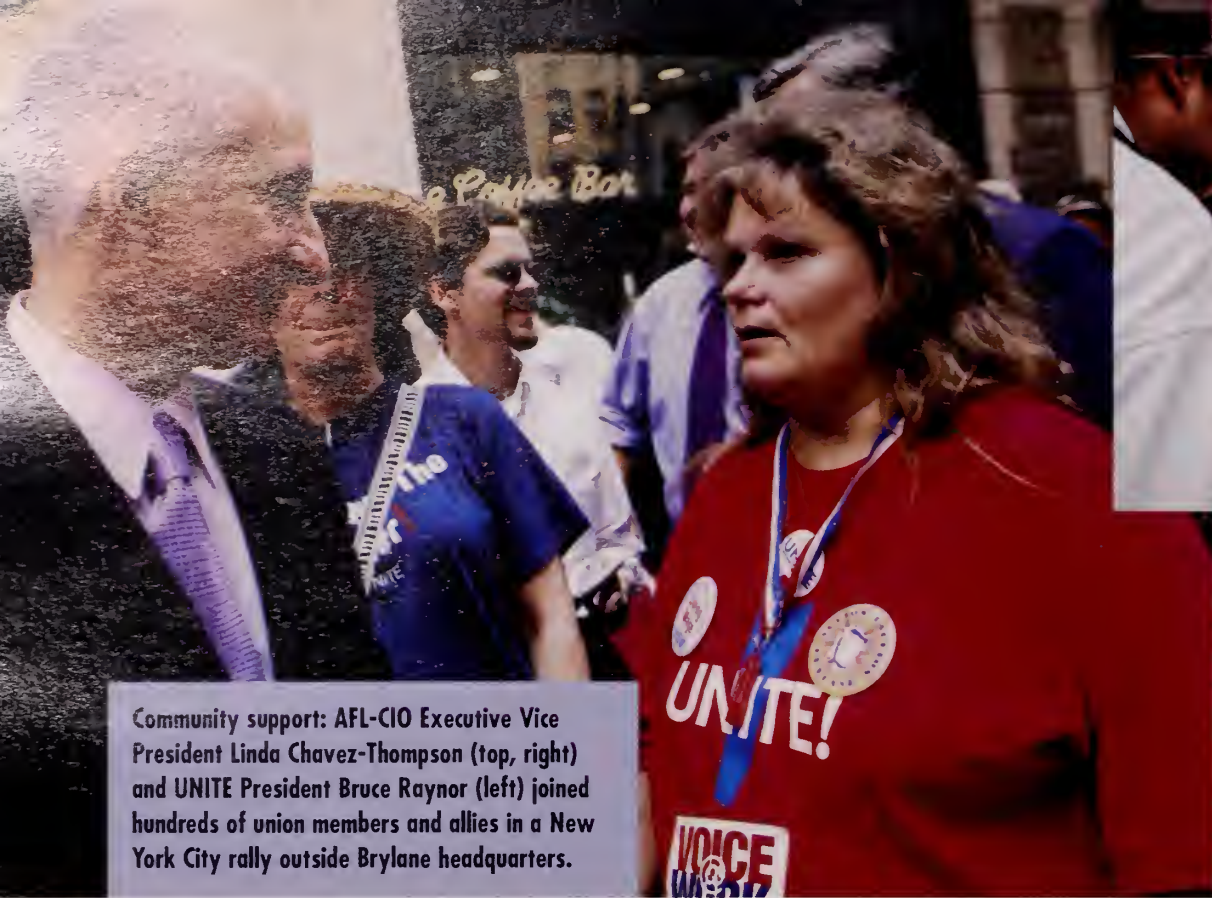
A Voice @Work

Workers at Brylane Take Their Campaign to the Community

By LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

At Brylane's Indianapolis warehouse, nearly 1,000 workers package and send out \$1.6 billion worth of merchandise annually, from pretty flower print dresses to kids' bed sheets imprinted with Clifford the Big Red Dog. The company markets apparel and home furnishings for nine mail order catalogs, including such well-known names as Lerner and Lane Bryant, and also is part of the French merchandising powerhouse Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (PPR), which includes luxury brands such as Gucci.

Many Brylane workers say they've suffered crippling repetitive motion injuries and burns from broken machines, provoking fines from the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration. "The company will continue to use the workers—injured or not—until they can no longer produce, at which time they will let them go, just like what they did to



Community support: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson (top, right) and UNITE President Bruce Raynor (left) joined hundreds of union members and allies in a New York City rally outside Brylane headquarters.



ANDREW UCHTENSTEIN

me,” says former Brylane worker Melody Purvis, who underwent three painful surgeries to address repetitive stress injuries. “I believe the only way that will change is when workers have their union.” The company dispenses meager raises at a whim and fires longtime employees with no explanation, the workers say.

Fed up with this dangerous and disrespectful treatment, the workers began organizing a union with UNITE in October 2001. Brylane immediately launched an anti-union campaign of intimidation and coercion—an all too frequent response from employers when workers seek a voice on the job. The company distributed an anti-union video, trained supervisors to fight the union and separated out Latino workers, requiring them to attend captive audience meetings at which managers hinted at firings and deportations.

To combat Brylane’s intimidation of its employees, UNITE leaders and activists embarked on a campaign that harnessed the workers’ passion for justice—and that of their allies among community groups, religious congregations and elected officials. As part of the union movement’s *Voice@Work Month* in June, UNITE—like dozens of other unions—held events across the country to showcase the crucial strategy of building lasting coalitions with allies who will stand with workers, intervene in their organizing struggles

and build the support necessary to change U.S. labor laws that disadvantage workers.

Mobilizing community allies

When up against image-conscious employers and contractors, UNITE has a track record of success. During a recent fight by workers for a voice on the job at Riva Jewelry, which supplies Tiffany & Co., UNITE leaders coordinated a national day of action, mobilizing activists to leaflet 25 Tiffany stores in cities across the United States, from Beverly Hills to Manhattan. Several central labor councils



RON HOSKINS

No union-busting: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka met with Brylane workers in Indianapolis, where he joined them in a rally outside the company’s plant.

and chapters of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, an AFL-CIO constituency group, brought members to the May events in a strong showing of community solidarity. In New York City, LCLAA members attended rallies and wrote letters to elected officials alerting them about the campaign. Within two weeks, Riva ended its anti-union campaign, recognized the union and negotiated a strong contract.

In the case of Brylane, UNITE built on the connection between PPR’s ownership of Brylane and the chic Gucci line, which is synonymous in the public’s mind with “luxury.” UNITE activists mobilized unions and community allies to leaflet Gucci stores in some of the nation’s ritziest shopping districts, like the posh Galleria in Houston.

UNITE’s national leaders mobilized local unions that have strong membership bases near Gucci stores, linking them by conference calls and sending out leaflets and action checklists. In turn, local UNITE leaders in 27 cities reached out to their existing network of allies and spread the word about the events. Central labor councils, Jobs with Justice chapters, students, clergy, elected officials and community groups answered the call, turning out for spirited rallies during the last week in June as part of *Voice@Work Month*. And in cyberspace, an e-mail action alert from the AFL-CIO Working Families e-Activist Network generated 51,000 faxes from e-activists to PPR corporate decision makers demanding the company respect the workers’ desire for a union.

In New York City, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and UNITE President Bruce Raynor rallied with workers and allies. In the workers’ hometown of Indianapolis, AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Richard Trumka led a

250-strong march June 25 to the office of the union-busting law firm Brylane hired. The march was part of a long-term community campaign in which the Central Indiana Workers' Rights Board hosted a February hearing to explore the conditions at Brylane and uncover the company's anti-union campaign. Workers' Rights Boards, a project of Jobs with Justice, are local panels of elected officials and others who come together to address workplace justice issues. In Indianapolis, the panel recommended the company stop intimidating workers and allow workers to choose a union by signing union authorization cards, bypassing the long and potentially contentious National Labor Relations Board election process that gives employers the opportunity to harass and intimidate workers.

As part of the community campaign, members of the Indianapolis City Council sent letters of support to the workers and wrote to the chief executive officer of Brylane's parent company in France expressing their disappointment in the company's treatment of the workers. At the same time, UNITE leaders arranged meetings between workers and community leaders so they could hear firsthand about workers' struggle for a union. These community leaders often asked workers to address larger groups of members of the allied organizations after their initial relationship was solidified. "Allies are important to show the company we're watching them, that their conduct on the shop floor isn't going to stay there," says Ahmer Qadeer, director of UNITE's office of corporate and financial affairs. "We're going to hold them to a higher standard."

For Brylane workers, that standard is basic human rights. "I have only found a lack of respect and dignity and low wages for the work that we do," Brylane worker Vicente Robledo told the Workers' Rights Board. "It is for this and many more reasons that we ask you to support us in our fight to have a union at Brylane so that we may have a voice on the job." @

Workers Take Their Struggles to Capitol Hill

BRINGING THE FIGHT for a voice on the job to Capitol Hill, four workers testified at a U.S. Senate committee hearing—the first of its kind in 14 years—as part of *Voice@Work Month*.

More than ever, workers in the United States want to form unions so they can have a voice on the job. But instead of respecting workers' rights, employers routinely launch vicious anti-union campaigns: Fully 92 percent of employers force workers to attend mandatory anti-union presentations and 78 percent of employers force workers to attend one-on-one anti-union meetings with managers, according to a 2000 study by Cornell University scholar Kate Bronfenbrenner for the U.S. Trade Deficit Review Commission. The advocacy organization Human Rights Watch concluded in its recent report, *Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States Under International Human Rights Standards*, that "Freedom of association is a right under severe, often buckling pressure when workers in the United States try to exercise it."

At the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing June 20, Mario Vidales, a cook seeking to form a union with Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 226 at Santa Fe Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, said Congress must reform current labor laws that disadvantage workers. "Everyone was so happy and excited" when workers voted for the union in 1993 and thought they'd finally have a voice on the job, Vidales said. "But we were wrong. The company appealed just to delay negotiations."

Nancy Schweikhard, a nurse at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard, Calif., described how employers intimidate workers by holding one-on-one anti-union meetings with them. "Imagine how powerful such a negative message is for nurses when it is coming from the person who sets your schedule and assignments, approves your time off, has the power to impose disciplinary action and has a say in whether you get a raise," she said.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the Senate: "Whether legal or illegal, the tactics that oppress workers and block their free choice are disgusting, disgraceful and damaging to our nation."

Just before the landmark hearing—

attended by nearly all of the Democratic senators on the committee—Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), committee chairman, said, "We should not stand for this. America's workers deserve far better. Indeed, American democracy deserves far better."

Uneasy Terrain: The Impact of Capital Mobility on Workers, Wages and Union Organizing, by Kate Bronfenbrenner for the U.S. Trade Deficit Review Committee, is available at www.ustdrc.gov/research/bronfenbrenner.pdf.

Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States Under International Human Rights Standards, is available from Human Rights Watch online at www.hrw.org/reports/2000/uslabor.

The Silent War: The Assault on Workers' Freedom to Choose a Union and Bargain Collectively in the United States, a new 24-page issue brief from the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department, is available from the AFL-CIO Support Services Department, 202-637-5041 and at www.aflcio.org.

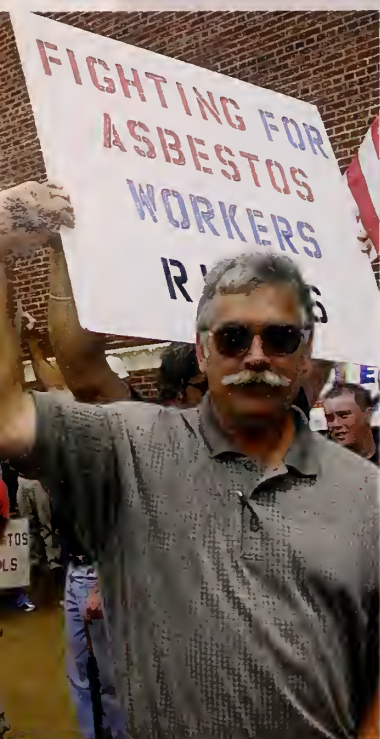
To see video clips from the hearing and to get more information, visit www.aflcio.org/voiceatwork/month_hearing. @



On the Hill: Nancy Schweikhard, RN, and Mario Vidales were among workers who testified before the U.S. Senate about the employer intimidation they faced when seeking a voice at work.

Voice@Work Coast to Coast

TINA DELGADO says coming together in a union with her fellow asbestos removal workers in Milwaukee had been “hush, hush.” Now that the Laborers are involving community allies in the struggle, “it’s really out in public.” At a *Voice@Work Month* event June 14, asbestos removal workers, students and members of several area unions rallied in support of Delgado’s cause. “When I saw all those people, that made us feel really good,” she says. “I saw that being in the union really counts for something.” Throughout June, dozens of unions held *Voice@Work Month* events across the country showcasing the crucial strategy of building lasting coalitions with allies who will stand with workers, intervene in their organizing struggles and build the support necessary to change U.S. labor laws that disadvantage workers.



DARREN HAUCK

■ After forming an alliance with consumer allies and the Chicago Federation of Labor, activists with Electrical Workers Local 21 in Chicago won an important victory when the Chicago City Council on

June 14 included several workers’ rights protections in its approval of transferring the city’s cable contract to the newly merged AT&T Comcast Corp. Members of IBEW Local 21 at AT&T Broadband have been working without a contract for several years, while another group of 2,800 workers at the company has been trying to win a voice on the job amid the company’s anti-union campaign.

■ In Miami, workers at the Mount Sinai-St. Francis Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and their allies fought management’s new low in union-busting. After workers there voted to form a union with SEIU Local 1199FL, administrators told the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that union activists used “voodoo” to spook workers into voting for the union. The NLRB rejected the company’s argument, but the employer is appealing. Enraged by the nursing home’s use of racial and religious stereotypes of the Haitian health care workers, union activists, religious leaders and elected officials,

including state Sen. Kendrick Meek (D), rallied and marched in heavy summer showers to protest.

■ Houston area activists boarded their “Justice Bus” June 28 for a fourth annual tour of worksites where workers are fighting for a voice on the job. One stop: a development of Pulte Homes, where subcontractor Metric Roofing is thwarting workers’ efforts to form a union. Across the Southwest, Metric workers say they aren’t getting fair pay and are forced to work under the scorching summer sun without water available. The company has fired several union activists.



JAY MALIN

■ Rallying with immigrant parking lot workers (above), Washington, D.C., activists called on InterPark to respect workers’ wishes to form a union with Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 27. The company is

bidding out the contracts of several downtown garages and without a union, the primarily Latino and Ethiopian workforce has no job security. The union also launched a website, www.parkingcustomer.org, to inform and mobilize commuters.

■ As part of the union movement’s Labor in the Pulpits program, 10 union activists from the New York City Central Labor Council spoke at area congregations June 23 to discuss why workers are fighting for a voice and respect on the job and describe the ties among the union movement, communities and religious institutions.

■ In Beaver, Pa., union activists, elected officials and allies hosted a spirited picnic with workers, including Amalgamated Transit Union members fighting for a first contract with First Transit and 1,200 workers at The Medical Center of Beaver County organizing with SEIU District 1199P.



JIM LEVITT

■ Spreading the word that the best protection against workplace discrimination for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers is a union contract, activists from the Seattle Out Front Labor Coalition/Seattle Pride At Work celebrated *Voice@Work Month* at the city’s Pride Festival and parade (above). Seattle-area union leaders and members joined with members of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance and Jobs with Justice dancing, singing and chanting along the parade route, greeting the mayor and a port commissioner along the way. @

Facing Death, Unionists Escape Colombia

When armed men looking for Carlos Flores arrived at his father's home in January, he knew he had two options: Leave his native Colombia or be killed. In the last seven months of 2001, eight members of his union, which represents public-sector workers, were murdered by paramilitary forces.

"From the beginning, we have been fighting against privatization. It is a very violent process driven by the multinational corporations," says Flores, general secretary of the state employees union SINTRAEMSDES. "The companies bribe the officials so they can take control of our national industries—telecommunications, petroleum, water and sanitation. When we denounce the actions, they bring in the paramilitaries."

Of the 223 trade unionists around the world who were murdered or disappeared last year, 201 were Colombians—an increase of 25 percent from 2000, accord-

ing to an International Confederation of Free Trade Unions survey released June 18.

With the help of the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (Solidarity Center), Flores, along with 16 other Colombian trade unionists—all of whom have been threatened with death—are safe, studying English and strategic organizing for a year at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md., and sharing their stories with union members across the country.

José Luis Cortes, general secretary of the Yumbo Municipal Workers Union, says Colombian workers are being victimized by the rules of the global economy, especially the "structural adjustment" provisions with which the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as conditions of loans, require developing nations to pursue policies such as privatization and reduced budgets that harm low-wage workers. At the



Safe haven: Colombian unionists José Luis Cortes (left), Carlos Flores and 15 colleagues are spending a year at the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md.

same time, the ability of multinational corporations to move capital seamlessly from country to country encourages poorer nations to attract businesses by setting low-wage standards and exploiting, even murdering, workers who speak out, he says.

Public-sector union members suffered 65 percent of the murders and disappearances in Colombia, the ICFTU reports. Although the Colombian government claims the deaths are the result of the country's ongoing civil war, the ICFTU survey says most of the killings were carried out by paramilitary groups, "which enjoy the tacit complicity of the security forces."

The global union movement has protested the dangerous conditions in Colombia, including holding a mass march in Washington, D.C., in April. Colombia's oil workers' union staged a 48-hour strike June 18–19 to protest the killing of one of its officials. But more protests and pressure are needed, Cortes says. Working people everywhere must unite to fight the corruption of the global economy, he says, or "Colombia's suffering could happen all over the world." @

—James B. Parks

Bloodshed in Ecuador

In Ecuador, banana workers also are enduring brutal attacks for seeking their fundamental rights to fair wages and justice on the job. In May, some 400 hooded men—hired by Noboa Corp., the world's fourth-largest banana corporation—twice attacked the workers in their homes on the Los Alamos Plantation, according to the U.S./Labor Education in the Americas Project (US/LEAP).

The workers, who won legal recognition for a union at the end of April, have been on strike since May 6 in an effort to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

Under pressure from unions and human rights activists, Costco Wholesale Corp., one of Noboa's largest U.S. customers, wrote the company to underscore that it expects suppliers to respect basic workers' rights and abide by the law. Noboa exports bananas to the United States under the Bonita brand.

Ecuador rapidly is becoming one of the world's top banana exporters as multinational companies flock to take advantage of that country's low-wage, nonunion workforce. Ecuador now provides 28 percent of the world's bananas and 25 percent of the U.S. supply, according to the United Nations. A US/LEAP study in 2000 showed banana workers in Ecuador are paid an average of \$56 per month, while banana workers in Panama, Colombia and Honduras, where banana workers' unions are stronger, are paid between \$150 and \$500 a month.

To take action in support of Ecuadoran banana workers, visit www.usleap.org and click on "Bananas." @



Seeking justice: Los Alamos worker Mauro Romero lost his leg after being shot at close range by Noboa-hired thugs.

To download the ICFTU survey, visit www.icftu.org and click on "Annual Report 2002." To learn how you can help fight for the rights of Colombian trade unionists, visit www.laborrightsnow.org and click on "Campaigns."

High Stakes in Nurse Staffing

Hospital patients fare far better when sufficient registered nurses are on duty—a reality front-line caregivers understand all too well that now is corroborated by a major federally funded study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. “It confirms what other studies

have shown and health care workers including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified nursing assistants, have long known—that not having the right mix of caregivers directly affects the quality of care,” says AFSCME Health Policy Analyst Nancy Currier.

Staffing issues help mobilize widespread support

Union leaders say the growing consciousness about the connection between nurse staffing and medical outcomes bolsters collective bargaining. In June 2001, 1,100 members of the UAN-affiliated Minnesota Nurses Association at two Minneapolis-St. Paul hospitals struck for contract language that would give head nurses the authority to close units to maintain safe staffing. “To raise money, we sold yard signs that said ‘I Believe Nurses: Safe Care Now,’ ” recalls MNA spokeswoman Jan Rabbers. “There were streets lined with them.” Ultimately, the hospitals agreed to the stronger staffing language after 23 days.

At two hospitals in New Jersey’s Bergen County, almost 1,000 registered nurses and 125 technical health care workers in three unions nearly went on strike as part of their fight for new contracts to make staffing ratios enforceable through mediation and arbitration. The members of Local 5004 of Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE), the New Jersey chapter of AFT Healthcare, and HP AE Local 5029 also won key support from local lawmakers: As a strike loomed, state representatives and county leaders joined police benevolent associations in sending letters to the hospital’s chief executive officer condemning plans to replace striking workers, says HP AE Education Director Mike Slott.

Moving staffing legislation

The study also gives fresh ammunition to activists fighting for state and federal legislation, says Nancy Lessin, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO’s safety and health coordinator. For instance, the Safe Nursing and Patient Care Act now in Congress would

limit mandatory overtime (S. 1686, sponsored by Massachusetts Democratic senators Edward Kennedy and John Kerry, and H.R. 3238, sponsored by representatives Pete Stark [D-Calif.] and Steven LaTourette [R-Ohio]). The study also gives momentum to state bills such as the “Safe Staffing For

Quality Care Act” in Pennsylvania, an SEIU-supported measure that establishes nurse-patient ratios and provides for nurse recruitment and training of current health care workers.

Setting better staffing standards—in addition to ensuring adequate pay and respect for nurses in the decision making process and prohibiting mandatory overtime—would bring more nurses back to the hospital floor, activists say. That’s the hope in California, the only state so far to pass and implement such legislation—signed into law in 1999 as a result of health care unions’ hard-fought efforts. When an

Australian province set new nurse-patient ratio standards last year, 3,000 nurses returned to work, says Mary McDonald, director of AFT Healthcare: “We believe you fix the shortage by guaranteeing nurses they won’t work in conditions dangerous to patients.” @

—Jane Birnbaum

A copy of the report is available for \$10 via U.S. mail, \$12 for fax or e-mail, from The New England Journal of Medicine. Call 800-843-6356 and ask for customer service.

Nursing Home Staffing Shortage

A new Alliance for Retired Americans study finds that seniors in the nation’s 17,000 nursing homes cannot be assured of quality care because of a severe nurse staffing shortage.

And like hospitals, the report concludes, nursing homes must offer better working conditions to attract nurses. @

Nursing Home Care: When Will We Get It Right? costs \$5 and is available by calling Ruby Scott at 202-974-8231.



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

On target: UAN President Cheryl Johnson says the new study makes clear the crisis in nurse staffing.

Highly trained registered nurses have the greatest impact on medical outcomes, according to the study, *Nurse-Staffing Levels and Quality of Care in Hospitals*, which analyzed data from 799 acute-care hospitals in 11 states. Yet employers targeted registered nurses for cost cutting during the profit-driven restructuring of the health care system in the mid-1990s, according to United American Nurses senior policy fellow Edmund Bronder.

“Today, many of those nurses are unwilling to return to what they describe as unsafe working conditions, and those who remain work in increasingly high-risk, high-stress environments,” he explains. “Of the nation’s 2.7 million registered nurses, nearly 20 percent are not employed in nursing. More than a nurse shortage, there is a staffing crisis resulting in too few nurses caring for too many acutely ill patients.”

Says SEIU senior legislative analyst Madeleine Golde, “Overwhelmingly, nurses say, ‘I cannot do the work I was trained to do, I cannot sleep worrying that I’ve made a terrible mistake that jeopardizes somebody’s life.’ ”

For UAN President Cheryl Johnson, the importance of the new study is its publica-



All the News That's Not Union

It seems that when it comes to teaching children about unions, *The Washington Post* management thinks even a little knowledge can be dangerous.

In June, members of the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers of America waged a "byline" strike at the *Post* in which they withheld their names from published articles to protest the *Post's* contract offer. The *Post* proposed a pay increase less than the cost of living adjustment—even though the Washington Post Co.'s after-tax profits for 2001 were \$230 million, and the operating prof-

its for the Newspaper Division were \$85 million.

According to the local weekly the *Washington City Paper*, "KidsPost"—the *Post's* one-page daily feature for 8- to 12-year-olds—was set to run a story explaining the concept of unions and bylines when Managing Editor Leonard Downie killed it. The reason? "There are only three or four items in 'KidsPost,' and I can't see that that would be one of most interest to kids," Downie told the *City Paper*.

After all, some of them might find out about employee rights and grow up to become Newspaper Guild members. @

Union-Busting Is Disgusting

When Electrical Workers Local 300 in Burlington, Vt., learned that a local accounting firm, Gallagher, Flynn & Co., planned a union-busting seminar, union leaders passed the

word to the Champlain Valley Labor Council, which swung into action. The council made plans for a "Union-Busting is Disgusting" rally outside the firm on the day of the May seminar, and scheduled an action to flood the firm with phone calls and e-mails. Activists also received critical support from the Massachusetts Painters and Allied Trades union: an offer of the union's rat costume for the event.

But as the day of the event neared and word got out about the union plans, management at Gallagher—whose website brags the firm "has developed an unparalleled record assisting companies in remaining union-free"—found that no



Not in our backyard: Vermont union activists successfully exposed a union-busting firm.



Star power: UFT/AFT President Randi Weingarten (center) joined hip-hop superstars at a rally in support of New York City teachers.

Live from New York City Teachers and Hip-Hop Stars

In New York City, where teachers faced budget cuts that would have resulted in larger class size and reduced equipment and supplies, tens of thousands of United Federation of Teachers/AFT members and their allies turned out for a massive rally in June at City Hall. Among those supporters: some of hip-hop's top stars, including Sean (P. Diddy) Combs, Jay-Z, LL Cool J and Erykah Badu. The rally, promoted for two weeks on hip-hop radio stations, drew thousands of screaming, ecstatic teenagers who gathered early and filled up the entire four blocks set aside for the rally.

The kids were thrilled to see the hip-hop stars, but it was also a chance to send a message about their schools. Before long, UFT President Randi Weingarten led them in chants of "Stop the budget cuts!" and "Do a teachers' contract now!"

Because of the crowds, some teachers weren't able to get near the podium, but the massive show of high-visibility support sent a strong (and musical) message to Mayor Michael Bloomberg (R): The community is on the side of teachers and their students. Following the rally, budget cuts got the axe and teachers got a new two-year contract that includes pay raises between 16 percent and 22 percent and a no lay-off clause. @

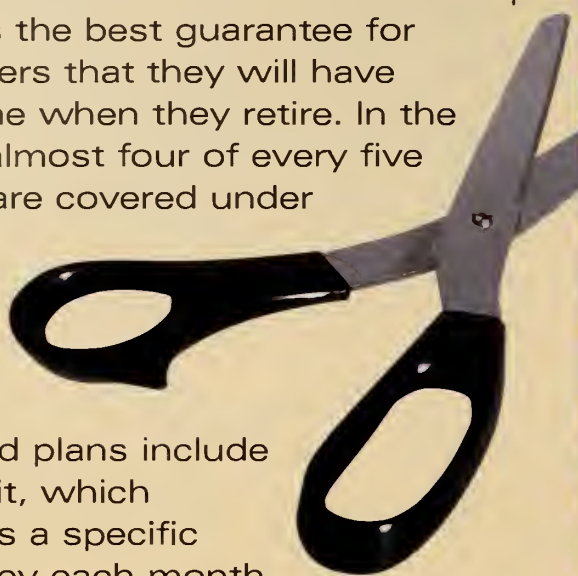
one had registered for its seminar. What's more, the nervous union-busters asked to meet with local union leaders. The executives tried to justify their schemes by insisting that union-busting makes up "only" 5 percent of their business and that all of their union-busting takes place outside Vermont, according to

labor council President Jerry Colby.

On the day of the canceled seminar, union members—joined by two members of the Burlington City Council—held a victory rally at Gallagher headquarters. In the meantime, the labor council asks that anyone with information on the company call Colby at 802-860-4376. @

Unions Make the Difference

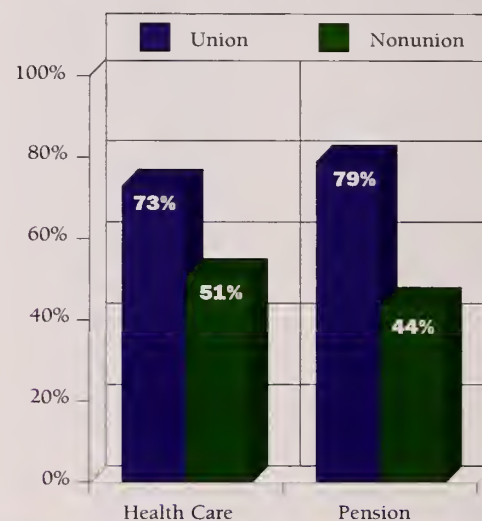
Union workers of all ages receive better wages and benefits. Union membership also offers the best guarantee for America's workers that they will have sufficient income when they retire. In the United States, almost four of every five union workers are covered under pension plans, compared with less than half of nonunion workers. Many union-negotiated plans include a defined benefit, which ensures workers a specific amount of money each month. Union contracts also give workers a voice in the management of their retirement accounts through union-management trusteeships.



Union Members Have Better Benefits

Union members are more likely to receive health care and pension benefits than nonunion workers. In 1999, 73 percent of union workers in private industry participated in employer-sponsored health care benefits, compared with 51 percent of nonunion workers. Eight of 10 union workers—79 percent—were covered under pension plans and only 44 percent of nonunion workers had such retirement protection.

Health and Pension Benefits, 1999

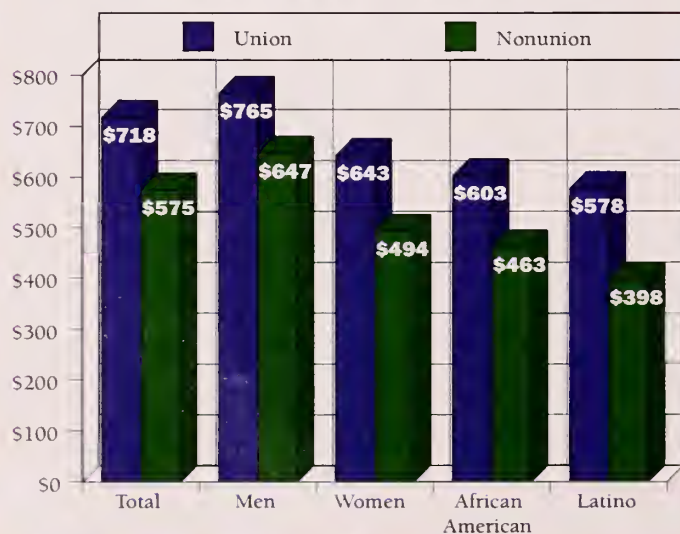


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employee Benefits in Private Industry, 1999*

Union Workers Earn More

On average, union workers earn 25 percent more per week than nonunion workers. The union advantage is even greater for women and people of color.

Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers, 2001

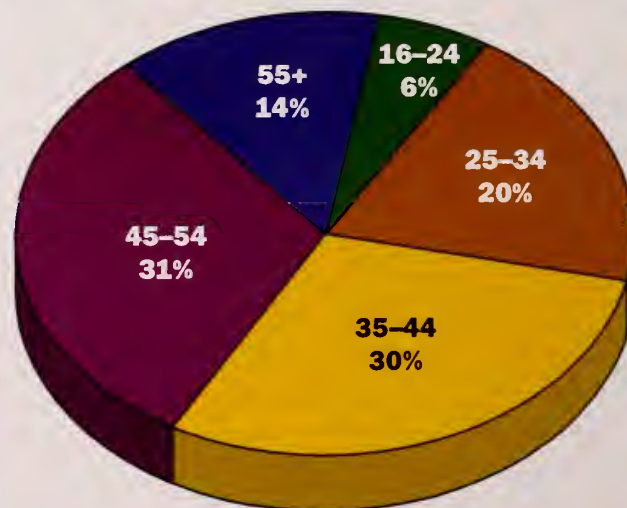


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings, January 2002*

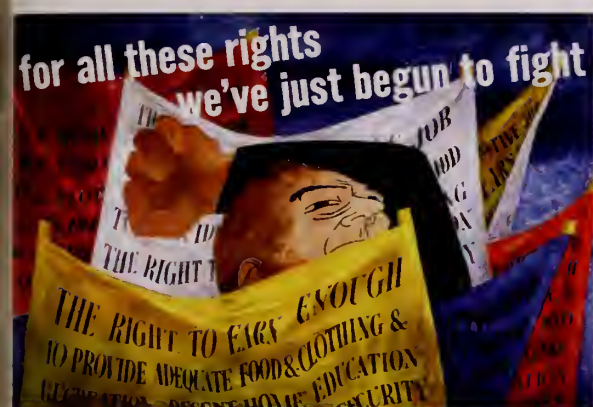
Unions Are Important for Workers of All Ages

Workers of all ages are seeking union representation—from young workers who are starting their first jobs to workers older than 55 who may be nearing retirement. In 2001, half of union members were between ages 25 and 44 and 14 percent were older than 55.

Union Membership for Various Age Groups



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings, January 2002*



REGISTER VOTE

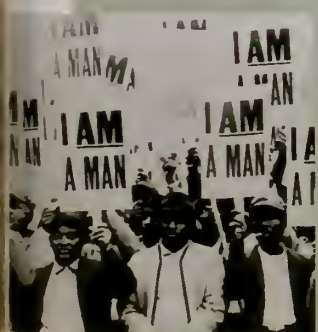
EXHIBIT

Solidarity Forever—Graphics of the International Labor Movement, on exhibit at the George Meany Memorial Archives through Sept. 13, features 54 union political posters. Representing union struggles from picket line messages to fights for legislative change, the traveling exhibit is organized by the Center for the Study of Political Graphics (www.politicalgraphics.org). The Meany Archives is located at 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903. For more information, visit www.georgemeany.org/archives/exhibits.html or call 301-431-5451.

PUBLICATION

Students Against Sweatshops, by Liza Featherstone and United Students Against Sweatshops, chronicles the growth of the student anti-sweatshop movement, detailing the students' strategies and tactics to ensure college and university administrations reject sweatshop-made products

EXHIBIT



The AFL-CIO is hosting a photograph exhibit chronicling the 1968 sanitation strike in Memphis, Tenn., during which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lost his life. The powerful "I Am A Man" exhibit, which opened at the federation in July, depicts the struggle by the mostly black workers for dignity and justice and illustrates the strong links between workers' rights and the civil rights movements. The exhibit begins with the first meeting between strikers and the Memphis mayor in February 1968 and follows the strike up to a successful conclusion in April 1968, less than two weeks after King's assassination, when the workers won recognition for their union and gained a first contract.

bearing school logos. The book also examines USAS, a network of more than 180 campus groups, and its relationships with unions and other activist groups. \$15. Verso Books at www.versobooks.com or phone 800-233-4830; or order through Powells at www.powells.com or phone 866-201-7601.

CONFERENCE

The Alliance for Retired Americans' first national meeting, under the theme "New Century, Strong Voice, Real Action!" is set for Sept. 3–5 in Washington, D.C. The conference will focus attention on the nation's two most important social insurance programs—Social Security and Medicare—through workshops, training sessions and guest speakers. Participants will take their message to Capitol Hill when they join in a massive rally and lobby day and will sharpen their political skills to ensure a strong turnout of seniors this Election Day. For more information or to receive registration and other materials, call the Alliance toll-free at 888-373-6497.

REPORTS

The Working Paper Series, produced by the AFL-CIO Center for Working Capital, addresses U.S. and international pension issues. Available on the center's website at www.centerforworkingcapital.org, or order for \$10 each by contacting the Center for Working Capital at 202-974-8020. Order forms can be downloaded from the resources section of the website and faxed or mailed to the Center for Working Capital.

EVENT

Union members in Billings, Mont., played a key role in the first of what became a nationwide project created to combat hate crimes—efforts documented in "Not In Our Town," a video produced by The Working Group that aired on PBS stations nationwide in 1995. That documentary spawned a movement that fights hate crimes, racism, anti-Semitism and anti-gay violence. This year, during National Civic Participation Week, Sept. 11–17, Not In Our Town events planned across the nation will provide union activists the opportunity to strengthen bonds with other community groups participating in the events. For more information, visit www.pbs.org/niot and www.participateamerica.org. Copies of the video are available at the PBS site.



MUSIC

"Solidarity: It Can't Be Beat," by the Solidarity Singers of the New Jersey Industrial Union Council, features 19 songs in English, Spanish and Yiddish on organizing, civil rights, globalization, child labor and other worker issues. The CD concludes with "Solidarity Forever" in its original form with all of Ralph Chaplin's rarely sung lyrics. \$15, including shipping, from the New Jersey Industrial Union Council, c/o UAW Region 9, 1589 Lamberton Road, Trenton, N.J. 08611. \$13.99, plus shipping, from www.silkcitycd.com/online.htm or phone 973-599-0237. @

America doesn't stand for
CORPORATE GREED
PROFITS BEFORE PEOPLE
LOOTING OF COMMUNITIES

Working Americans will not stand for
BUSINESS AS USUAL

The culture of corporate greed that has left tens of thousands of employees without jobs, health care or retirement security is not the moral fiber that built America. This fall, union members and their allies are holding **NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL** actions and events during Labor Day and throughout the election season.

Here's how you can take part:

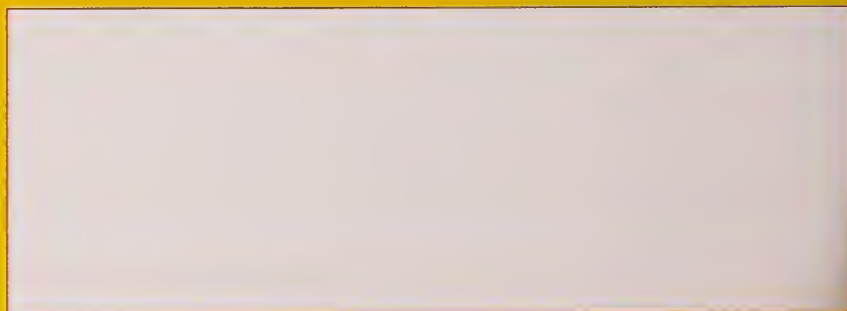
- ✗ Urge lawmakers to pass legislation to hold corporations accountable through reforms to curb greed and put people and communities ahead of profits. Get updates and action info at www.aflcio.org.
- ✗ Ask elected leaders to honor America's working heroes by backing a working families agenda that includes affordable prescription medication, safeguarding retirement security, improving and protecting public education and creating and maintaining good jobs.
- ✗ Set up No More Business As Usual events with the help of T-shirts, placards, stickers and other AFL-CIO materials available through www.aflcio.org.

NO MORE
BUSINESS
AS USUAL

AFL-CIO

**RESOURCES
FOR LAID-OFF
EMPLOYEES**

To help meet the needs of laid-off workers—including the 17,000 WorldCom employees laid-off because of corporate greed—and those worried they might lose their jobs, the AFL-CIO launched www.laidoffworkers.org—a new website that provides resources for surviving unemployment, learning what went wrong and protecting retirement security. The site also provides the chance to have some fun, with games like Smash Corporate Greed! Get the word out to your community.



Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

SEPTEMBER 2002

American @work

No Way to Honor Heroes

**ALSO
INSIDE:**

**No More
Business
As Usual**

**An Agenda
for All
America**

**A Placebo
for Reform**

**A Drive
for Justice**



“MY THANKS TO Mr. John J. Sweeney for taking up for laid-off WorldCom workers and their severance package. I was recently laid off from WorldCom and am quite distressed over the thought of losing my 17-week severance package....I was with WorldCom for 15 years....I feel WorldCom will not pay out its severance promises, and that would be disastrous for former employees who have seen their 401(k)s melt down and their stock options at zero. Please continue putting pressure on WorldCom to pay as promised.”—Christine Hewitt, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

SAY WHAT?

What actions is your union taking to hold corporations accountable?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

about how your union is getting young people involved in working family issues:

“IN 1994, the leaders of New York State United Teachers [realized] many of the original activists who helped form the statewide union were close to retirement....NYSUT organized a task force to come up with ways to bring more of its new members into full participation in the union. Today, New Member programs at the local and regional levels educate new members about ways the union can help them, and ways in which they can help the union. Successful local efforts are shared through NYSUT's newspaper, website (www.nysut.org), e-mail, videoconferences and CD.”—Frank Ciarlo, New York State United Teachers/AFT

“I'M VERY APPRECIATIVE of your organization for caring about laid-off WorldCom employees. WorldCom certainly doesn't seem too concerned....Now, many of us, we're not union members, however, if you stand up with us, I will spend the rest of my life reminding people of the fact that you all, perfect strangers, were the only ones who gave a damn when the chips were down. Companies should not be able to recruit based on one set of promises and then change everything, leaving workers...holding an empty bag.”—William Kewin, Rowlett Texas

“IF MY LITERARY abilities matched my anger at Sens. [Phil] Gramm (R-Texas) and [Mitch] McConnell (R-Ky.), this would have the makings of a Pulitzer Prize....[T]he loss of thousands of jobs, pensions and life savings for the former employees at WorldCom, Enron Corp. and other such corporations has little meaning for those two....Rather than face up to the problem, they are avoiding a problem they helped to create with their right-wing deregulation of the 1990s. But...what can we expect from those who are on the corporate dole? What's needed is stronger regulation, effective oversight and less in stock option plans for overpriced CEOs. It is they who should be returning the money to their shareholders, followed by a stint as guests of our federal prison system. Some members of the Republican party are in a bind; they were major recipients of campaign contributions from both the accounting industry and WorldCom, both of which need some lessons on corporate financial responsibility.”—John DeRosier, Teamsters Local 662, Eau Claire, Wis.

AFL-CIO affiliates are encouraged to reprint or excerpt articles in America@work.

America@work

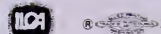
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CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

AFSCME: In It for the Long Term
Unions to Bush: Let Us Bargain
Justice Is No Sweat

20 LIKE IT IS

Supreme Court Isn't the
Only One to Watch

21 OUT THERE

Streaming Storytime
Boohoo Yahoo!
Real-Life Working Heroes

22 TOOLBOX

The Sagging Bottom Line

23 HOMEPAGE

Publications: *Lost Ground: Welfare Reform, Poverty and Beyond*
African Americans, Labor and Society: Organizing for a New Agenda

Websightings: Resources for workers who lost their jobs or fear they might and tools for the upcoming election campaigns

Memorial Wall: "American Tragedy, Union Heroes: Union Members Lost to Terrorism," a 40-foot long, 10-foot high tribute, is available for union events

8

NO WAY TO HONOR HEROES

One year after Sept. 11, the workers to whom the country turned in the wake of the nation's worst terrorist attacks find their collective bargaining rights, wages and jobs under assault

11

NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL

This election season, working families are taking the message to lawmakers that despite recent attention to corporate wrongdoing, much remains to be done, including reforms to protect workers' retirement and an end to corporate tax dodging

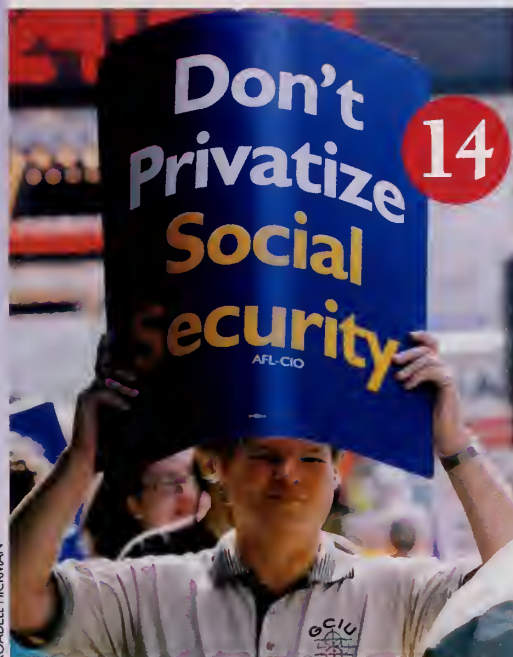


JIM TYNAN

14

AN AGENDA FOR ALL AMERICA

Based on the AFL-CIO Agenda for All America, this Campaign 2002 issues guide provides a useful tool for determining which candidates deserve your union's support



ROADELL HICKMAN

16

A PLACEBO FOR REFORM

It might be good medicine for the drug industry, but the House Republican prescription drug bill is a bitter pill



JIM WEST

18

A DRIVE FOR JUSTICE

Johnson Controls employees won a voice at work with UAW that ultimately could include 8,000 workers at 26 plants

Cover: Jim Tynan

Operating Engineers member Bobby Gray worked seven days a week for months cleaning up the World Trade Center site—but like thousands of working heroes, now sees his health and safety and other workplace rights under assault.

Justice Is No Sweat

The State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) now can refuse to sell clothing made in sweatshops—even if the garments carry the lowest price, under a bill signed by Gov. George Pataki (R) last month. Supported by the state's union movement, the bill also creates the "Sept. 11 Bidders Registry," which gives purchasing preferences for contracts with SUNY, CUNY and state and local governments to apparel firms affected by 9-11.

In New York, as elsewhere, union member and civil rights, student and religious activists are scoring victories in their campaigns to end the use of sweatshops—factories where workers labor for long hours at low pay and in unsafe conditions to produce apparel. In June, New Jersey Gov. James McGreevey (D) signed an executive order requiring that every uniform purchased by the state be produced in the United States in facilities where workers are treated with respect and earn wages above the poverty level.

In Tallahassee, Fla., members of Florida State University's United Students Against Sweatshops in July convinced university President Sandy D'Alembarte to meet with a student-backed Worker Rights Consortium representative regarding the use of sweatshops.

In Bloomfield Hills, Mich., near Detroit, UNITE President Bruce Raynor led a march to a Gap store to protest the horrible working conditions at the store's contractor in El Salvador. The August rally included members of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, an AFL-CIO constituency group whose activists were meeting in the Motor City for their annual convention. @



Speaking out: UNITE President Bruce Raynor takes part in an anti-sweatshop rally in suburban Detroit.

SHAWN D. ELLIS/METRO DETROIT LABOR NEWS

Fire Fighters Mobilize to Restore Bush's Cuts

While meeting at the union's annual convention in August, Fire Fighters got word that President George W. Bush will not release the \$5.1 billion Congress approved for supplemental homeland security programs—funds that include \$90 million to monitor the health of workers who cleaned up the rubble at the World Trade Center site. Also axed in the spending bill: \$150 million for equipment and training grants requested by some of the nation's 18,000 fire departments and \$100 million to improve the communications systems for firefighters, police officers and other emergency personnel. The Bush administration's action is among many recent

attacks on working families and their unions (see p. 8).

The IAFF, which is holding a Sept. 12 tribute in New York City to all firefighters and their families as well as its annual memorial service in Colorado Springs Sept. 21, plans to challenge Bush's action. IAFF President Harold Schaitberger says the union, which also plans to participate in an Oct. 12 tribute in Washington, D.C., will lobby Congress to include the money in the spending bills for the federal fiscal year that begins Oct. 1.

Schaitberger also says he will write a letter of protest to Bush and will return a videotaped message Bush sent to the Fire Fighters convention in which Bush called the Sept. 11 firefighters heroes. @

Executive Council Calls Organizing Summit

The AFL-CIO launched plans for a national organizing summit to convene early in 2003. "We cannot hope to accomplish our political goals nor protect the members we now have at the bargaining table or in the political arena unless we are all growing again as both individual unions and as a labor movement," the AFL-CIO Executive Council said in a statement adopted at its meeting in Chicago Aug. 6. The summit will set priorities for union organizing in major sectors of the economy and lay the groundwork for legal reform to ensure respect for workers' rights.

The council also condemned the Bush administration's attempt to strip the collective bargaining and civil service rights of workers in the proposed new Homeland Security Department.

And asserting that "American working families are the real victims of the greed gripping American business," council members called on Congress to pass new and tough corporate accountability measures that put workers first, give shareholders a voice in the companies they own and hold CEOs and corporate boards accountable.

To read the council's statements, visit www.aflcio.org. @

Librarians Unite for Equal Pay

Most librarians hold master's degrees—and most also are women, paid an average starting salary of \$34,000 a year. In contrast, male-dominated job fields that require master's degrees—such as database administrator—pay nearly double the average salary of a librarian. To remedy the inequality, the American Library Association (ALA) is launching a pay equity campaign that includes support for union organizing as

an effective strategy for winning better wages.

Noting that many library employees already are union members, ALA President Maurice Freedman says, "Female-dominated occupations, such as teachers and nurses, have achieved significant gains by organizing."

For more information and to download a pay equity toolkit, visit www.ala.org/pio/advocacy/better_salariestoolkit.pdf. @

MAKING VOTING A FAMILY AFFAIR

Children who go to the polls with their parents are more likely to vote when they are adults, according to a study by the Council for Excellence in Government, one of the sponsors of the 2002 Take Your Kids to Vote campaign. The study found that of the young adults who grew up in an environment that included political discussion, 75 percent are registered to vote and 71 percent trust the government, compared with 57 percent and 53 percent, respectively, whose home life did not

include political discussions.

Sponsored by the Partnership for Trust in Government and its members, including the AFL-CIO, the Take Your Kids to Vote campaign is aimed at reversing the continuing decline in the percentage of adults who vote—only one in five young adults votes, according to the National Association of Secretaries of State.

For more information on how your union can make voting a family affair, visit www.takeyourkidstovote.org. @

Unions to Bush: Let Us Bargain

Negotiations between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the West Coast maritime industry are going nowhere because Bush administration's threats to support a lockout have taken away any incentive for management to bargain seriously, union leaders say.

The White House has threatened to invoke a Taft-Hartley injunction to require the union members to return to work if they strike, to pass special legislation restricting dock workers' collective bargaining rights and their right to strike and, most ominously, to use the military to support a lockout. "We will never get to productive bargaining until the Bush administration gets out of our business," ILWU President James Spinosa says.

The union movement has joined the battle to get the White House out of the negotiations so the two sides can bargain without interference. Meeting in August, the AFL-CIO Executive Council called on the administration to pledge publicly that it will not inter-

vene in the talks and under no circumstance use troops to support a lockout.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka joined ILWU members and supporters in a Labor Day rally demanding a fair, negotiated contract and denouncing the Bush administration's "union-busting" tactics.

The contract covering 16,000 workers expired July 1, but the union agreed to day-to-day extensions during the talks. @



Waves of support: Thousands of dockworkers and their allies protest management's refusal to negotiate in good faith.

SPOTLIGHT

AFSCME: In It for the Long Term

Combining community support with a long-term legislative strategy, a majority of 431 home health aides in the Essex County, N.J., area won a voice on the job with District 1199/AFSCME in early August.

Low wages galvanized the workers—most of them Latina, African American and African immigrant women—to form a union at Chrill, a nonprofit home health agency. "They wouldn't listen to us when we'd try to speak to them," says Pearl Brooks, a home care worker who earned slightly more than \$8 dollars an hour after 21 years on the job.

The employees first had to overcome an anti-union campaign that included many captive audience meetings—an experience that was not unique. In an astounding 92 percent of all organizing campaigns, employers force workers to attend mandatory anti-union presentations, according to Cornell University scholar Kate Bronfenbrenner.

Local NAACP activists played a key role in supporting the workers' efforts. James Harris, president of the Montclair, N.J., branch of the civil rights group, was part of a delegation to the company's Montclair office presenting managers with a petition asking them not to interfere with workers' freedom to form a union. He also met with workers and went to the polls on the day of the vote. "The NAACP got involved because there are civil rights issues at stake," says Harris. "People should have the right to organize—and management was trying to intimidate them."

Because the aides work at multiple sites, making it difficult for the union to contact workers, AFSCME organizers devised an alternative to workplace-centered communication. The union built solidarity by holding neighborhood meetings at public libraries and coffee shops. With many workers relying solely on public transit, the strategy proved effective.

The win comes scarcely a year after AFSCME activists across New Jersey mobilized with rallies and legislative visits for passage of a state law raising home care workers' wages. @



Neighborhood solidarity: Community support helped 431 home health aides win a voice at work with District 1199/AFSCME.

On the Road to Citizenship

Union and immigrant rights activists are stepping up efforts to reform the nation's immigration laws. To demonstrate to Congress and President George W. Bush that there is widespread support for reform, the AFL-CIO will sponsor an "Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride: On the Road to Citizenship" and a mass demonstration in Washington, D.C., in late spring 2003.

The Freedom Ride will build on the Reward Work Coalition's "A Million Voices for Legalization" campaign, an SEIU-initiated effort in which unions are joining with faith-based and community organizations to collect 1 million signatures on postcards urging lawmakers to "support immigration policies that reward work by giving hardworking, taxpaying immigrants already in the United States the opportunity to earn legal status." Culminating the postcard campaign, SEIU and the coalition will hold a rally in Washington, D.C., Oct. 9.

Last year, the AFL-CIO called for comprehensive immigration law overhaul that includes upholding the right of immigrants to form unions and legalizing immigrant workers and their families.

To send a post card, visit www.seiu.org/action_center/issues_and_action/immigration/action_immigpostcard.cfm. @

Union Movement Mourns Stephen Yokich

Former UAW President Stephen P. Yokich died Aug. 16 after suffering a stroke. Yokich, 66, led the UAW from 1995 until his retirement in June 2002. "Under his leadership, the UAW became a stronger advocate for its members, a more powerful voice for the power-

less and a more relentless champion of the progressive ideals our country was founded upon," says AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. Memorial contributions may be made in Yokich's memory to the Community Caring Program, P.O. Box 530967, Livonia, Mich. 48153. @

Minority TV Roles Decline

The number of television and theatrical roles for actors of color declined last year, according to a study released in July by the Screen Actors.

African Americans received 14.4 percent of the roles cast, a decrease from the 14.8 percent in 2000, while Latinos received 4.8 percent, down from 4.9 percent in 2000. Asian/Pacific Islanders received 2.5 percent of the roles cast, a drop from 2.6 in 2000.

Women also were under-represented in acting roles. Although women make up the majority of Americans, men received 62 percent of the roles cast in 2001. These numbers are similar to those in previous years. In addition, men worked nearly twice as many days as

women in roles cast for TV and theatrical projects in 2001.

"It is very important that the images of all Americans are accurately portrayed on television and in theaters," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who chairs the federation's Committee on Civil and Human Rights. "Ours is a multiracial and multilingual society. It's time for more people of color to be cast for roles, not fewer." @

RAY CROWELL/PAGE ONE



AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson

Union Plus Scholarships Available

Underscoring the union movement's commitment to higher education, the Union Plus Scholarship Program provided scholarships this year to 101 students, representing 32 unions. Union members who participate in the Union Plus program, as well as their spouses and dependent children, are eligible for the scholarships, ranging from \$500 to \$4,000.

The scholarships are awarded based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of the union movement.

Applications for Union Plus 2003 scholarships are available on the Union Privilege website at www.unionprivilege.org or by sending a postcard request to Union Plus Scholarship Program, P.O. Box 34800, Washington, D.C. 20043-4800. Applications must be submitted by Jan. 31, 2003. @

Union Community Fund to Expand Help for Workers

The Union Community Fund plans to use a new grant to expand its support of community-based organizations that address the needs of low-income working families.

The union movement's national charity will use the \$300,000 Ford Foundation grant awarded in August to hire field staff to help develop at least 10 new local Union Community Fund chapters within the next year and to provide training, strategic planning and campaign management assistance. The new local Union Community Funds will target efforts to address economic justice issues and the



social services needed by low-income working families.

The Union Community Fund, initiated by but independent of the AFL-CIO, encourages the charitable giving of union members to support community-based nonprofit groups addressing the concerns and needs of working families. The Union Community Fund also is a part of the national Combined Federal Charities Campaign. Any federal employee can contribute to the Union Community Fund by using the code CFC #9898. For more information on the Union Community Fund, visit www.unioncommunityfund.org. @

Paid Family Leave: It Pays

Big Business likes to say that providing paid family leave for workers to care for their kids or aging parents would cost corporations too much money. But a new study shows California businesses actually could save a whopping \$89 million a year under a paid family leave program the state legislature is considering. The savings come from retaining valuable employees and reducing turnover, according to *Paid Family Leave in California: An Analysis of Costs and Benefits*, authored by researchers from the University of Chicago and the University of California, Berkeley, for the Labor Project for Working Families. In addition to the savings to businesses, the state could save \$25 million a year because fewer people would rely on public assistance, the report finds.

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act, signed into law

in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, allows many workers to take 12 weeks of unpaid time off to take care of their own or a family member's illness or to spend time with a new child. But many workers can't afford to miss even one paycheck. Backed by the California Federation of Labor and its allies, S.B. 1661 would use worker and employer contributions to expand the state's disability insurance system to allow partially paid leave for workers to take care of children or ill family members.

"Californians will benefit tremendously—as will the entire nation, since other states may well follow California's lead," says Judith Lichtman, president of the nonprofit National Partnership for Women and Families in Washington, D.C.

The study is available at <http://laborproject.berkeley.edu/publications/research/dube.pdf>. @

OUT FRONT

The day after President George W. Bush signed the new accounting reform law (a modest first step toward corporate accountability, which Bush had opposed as long as he could), the Business Roundtable ran full-page ads saying, essentially, "That's enough."

"President Bush and Congress have done their job to improve corporate governance," the ads said. "The rest is up to us."

And when the U.S. House rejected a meaningful Medicare prescription drug benefit in favor of a handout to insurance companies and HMOs that would leave seniors without guaranteed help paying for medications (see page 16), the pharmaceutical industry funded a congratulatory ad campaign to boost re-election chances for the helpful representatives.

Big Business, the Bush administration and their congressional allies want to make American voters believe they've addressed the corporate corruption crisis—that we now have the tools to take down the few "bad apples" dipping too far into workers' and shareholders' pockets. And they have yet to address the economic crises facing America's working families: stagnant wages, disappearing retirement savings and health coverage, state and local budget deficits that threaten jobs and public services, and staggering job loss—especially in the decimated manufacturing industry.

America's working heroes, who were so fervently praised after Sept. 11, are being left behind by leaders who favor special corporate interests over working families.

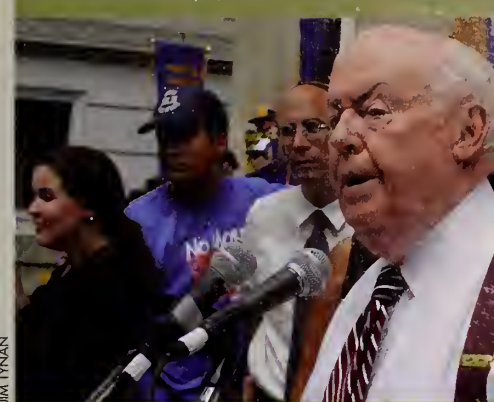
Our union movement must let every voter in this country know that corporate accountability work is not done. It will take a lot more to balance corporate power and influence and put people first. Workers still stand at the back of the line in bankruptcy courts pleading for what's due them. CEOs still rake in hundreds of millions in pay and stock options while driving companies into the ground. Workers still have no audible voice on the boards that decide how their 401(k) funds are invested. Employers still cut our pensions, and astronomically profitable pharmaceutical companies still charge so much for prescription drugs that seniors face choices between food and medicine.

Our union movement must seize this moment to keep public attention focused on the systemic corporate greed that kills jobs, hopes and futures—and the complicity among lawmakers that allows it to thrive.

Keep the heat on. Hold corporate accountability town hall meetings and rallies. Get workplace leaflets on candidate and incumbent positions into the hands of every union member.

Make 13 million voices heard, demanding: No More Business As Usual! @

Seize This Moment



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY



SHAWN D. ELLIS/METRO DETROIT LABOR NEWS


Justice for All

UNITE Vice President Clayola Brown joins union members and AFL-CIO community services representatives attending a conference in Miami at a rally to protest the deportation of 13 Haitian immigrant workers. The 13 were among 53 Haitians who have been detained for eight months by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. A Workers Rights Board convened by the South Florida AFL-CIO and Jobs with Justice in July called for the immediate release of the workers. @



BY JAMES B. PARKS

One year
after Sept. 11,
the workers
to whom the
country turned
in the wake of
the nation's
worst terrorist
attacks find
their collective
bargaining
rights, wages
and jobs
under assault



No Way to Honor

When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon one year ago, America's working men and women—firefighters, police and rescue units, along with hundreds of building trades workers, public employees and other workers—labored around the clock for months, removing the rubble, treating the wounded and ensuring the safety of the nation's borders, planes, trains and public facilities.

"We were just doing what we do best, using our skills, helping our communities," says Bobby Gray. A member of Operating

At risk: Workers who cleaned up the World Trade Center face potential long-term health hazards from carcinogens, asbestos and other toxic substances.

Engineers Local 14, Gray worked tirelessly as a crane operator for up to 16 hours a day throughout the nine-month process, cleaning up debris and removing bodies of many of the victims of the attack at the World Trade Center. Gray and the other workers worked 1.5 million hours, removed more than 1.8 million tons of rubble—and completed the work six months ahead of schedule and under budget.

"We just wanted to be there," Gray, 47, says. "I feel fortunate to have worked there. To me it was America at its best."

Facing new challenges on the job

Like the 30,000 workers cleaning up the World Trade Center site, Gray suffered no immediate life-threatening injuries—but ultimately may face serious health problems after being exposed to carcinogens, asbestos and other health hazards. Some medical experts have estimated at least half the workers cleaning up the World Trade Center site will require treatment for serious diseases as



JIM TYNAN

"We were just doing what we do best, using our skills, helping our communities."

—Bobby Gray, IUOE Local 14

Heroes

a result of their exposure. "It's like a sleeper. No one knows the extent of the damage. We may not know for years," Gray says.

But in a clear slap in the face to the workers, President George W. Bush said Aug. 13 he would not fund \$90 million sought by New York City union workers and state AFL-CIO leaders to establish a health-screening program for the workers. New York State AFL-CIO President Denis Hughes says the money would be used to establish a lifelong screening program to track the workers who loaded and hauled debris, restored utilities and performed other

cleanup work that exposed them to unknown quantities of several toxic substances.

Other workers are facing new challenges on the job after the attacks. Thousands of workers—postal employees, letter carriers, emergency medical service workers, airline pilots and flight attendants—now must be prepared to deal with a possible threat from chemical or biological substances that might be sent through the mail or carried on board a plane in a passenger's luggage. The Flight Attendants are lobbying Congress for training and tools to enable them to thwart potential hijackers on planes.

Thousands of New York City firefighters endure tremendous emptiness and sorrow at the loss of 343 of their brothers in the attacks, says Capt. Peter Gorman, president of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association/Fire Fighters Local 854.

"Some things are just hitting us now that the recovery is over. The emptiness was easier to deal with when we were focused on helping the families of the victims. It was like an extended family funeral. Everyone is there to support you until the funeral is over, then you're left alone and the next day the emptiness sets in," he says. Many of the firefighters have sought psychological counseling, he says, and others are finding other ways to cope.

Behind the guise of security

Hailed as America's heroes one year ago, many workers whose efforts were critical to saving lives and shoring up the devastation following Sept. 11 today find themselves under attack from demands for concessions, threat of job loss—and even efforts to take away collective bargaining rights.

Bush, who praised the construction workers' heroic efforts at Ground Zero, last year signed an executive order banning project labor agreements (PLAs) on federally funded construction projects. PLAs establish common work rules on large, multicontractor construction projects. A federal judge blocked Bush's order on PLAs but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit upheld Bush's order in a July 12 ruling. The AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department may appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Some congressional Republicans are attempting to remove Davis-Bacon protections—which require construction workers be paid the local prevailing wage on federal

infrastructure projects—from all projects related to the Homeland Security Department. Current rules allow for prevailing wages on projects funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), one of the agencies that will be merged into Homeland Security.

Also at stake is the right of federal workers on the front lines of homeland defense to belong to a union. Bush has proposed removing collective bargaining rights for about 50,000 employees in the new Homeland Security Department and denying the opportunity for a voice at work to 30,000 airport screeners expected to be hired for the first time as federal employees. Bush has threatened to veto any Homeland Security bill that includes collective bargaining rights.

These actions follow a Bush executive order in January excluding from collective bargaining hundreds of Justice Department employees, many of whom had been represented by unions for decades. Says Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI): "I think it's outrageous that there are moves to limit the democratic rights to bargain under the guise of security when it was union members who came to the rescue on Sept. 11."

Bobby Harnage, president of AFGE, which represents 600,000 federal employees, says, "No one is more interested in making their



JOCELYN AUGUSTINO

"No one is more interested in making their homeland secure than the dedicated men and women of the federal government who put their lives on the line every day of the year."

—AFGE President Bobby Harnage

homeland secure than the dedicated men and women of the federal government who put their lives on the line every day of the year.

"Union representation allows federal employees to speak out about problems they see on the job without fear of retribution from their superiors."

Before approving the new department, the House in July defeated an amendment by Rep. Connie Morella (R-Md.) to keep collective bargaining rights for Homeland Security employees who were represented by a union when the new agency was created. The Senate will take up the issue of collective bargaining rights for Homeland Security employees this month. For more information, visit www.afge.org.



"The leaders of big airline corporations ought to be ashamed of their hypocritical behavior."

—TWU President Sonny Hall

On the line: collective bargaining

The nation's transportation workers—the vanguard of defense if a plane or train is hijacked or under attack—also are fighting to stop the airlines from severely weakening the collective bargaining process and to prevent Bush administration efforts from attacks on Amtrak. The airline unions are battling industry-backed legislation that would allow the Secretary of Transportation to impose binding and compulsory arbitration—which Transport Workers President Sonny Hall calls a winner-take-all, "baseball style" arbitration process—and to block legal strike actions. This process would deny workers the right to negotiate issues such as wages, benefits and safety by tilting the collective bargaining process toward management, the

leaders of six transportation unions said in a letter to Congress.

The major airline carriers, which received \$10 billion in federal bailout money after Sept. 11—although the thousands of displaced airline workers received no aid—"don't miss a day pleading poverty or demanding massive wage and benefit concessions from their workers," says Hall, who heads the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department. "Yet they hire the most expensive Washington lobbyists money can buy to advance a bill to decimate airline workers' rights. The leaders of these big airline corporations ought to be ashamed of their hypocritical behavior."

To counter the airline industry's lobbying efforts, the Air Line Pilots union is launching its SCAM—Slanted, Compulsory Arbitration Method—campaign, which will focus on educating union members and lobbying Congress to defeat the bill.

The Bush administration, under the guise of national security, threatened to call out the National Guard—and perhaps the military—to support a government-precipitated lockout in the collective bargaining talks between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association (see page 5).

At the same time, Amtrak employees are mobilizing and lobbying members of Congress to ensure adequate funding for the national railway system, under attack by the Bush administration, which is trying to privatize Amtrak and put the railway system's 23,000 workers out of a job. Although the nation's airlines received billions in bailout funds after Sept. 11, Amtrak is under a congressional mandate to become operationally self-sufficient beginning in 2003. Noting that every developed nation subsidizes a national rail transportation system, Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), chairman of the Commerce Committee, is calling for the repeal of Amtrak's self-sufficiency requirement.

Facing the threat of Amtrak shutting down due to a lack of operating funds, working families mounted a campaign that led to Congress in June approving a temporary bailout package that would keep the trains running through August.

As the price for the stopgap funding, the Bush administration demanded the rail system seek concessions from workers, even though the employees took a wage freeze from 1987 to 1992 and have been working without a contract for more than two years.

Congress is considering several bills to

fund Amtrak, and the TTD estimates it will take at least \$1.2 billion to keep the trains running through the end of fiscal 2003. Complicating the decision is a recommendation by a hand-picked Bush administration commission that Amtrak be privatized and its routes be sold. The privatization model has been tried in Great Britain, Hall says, and has been a failure with chronic delays, lousy service, high fares—and multiple fatal accidents.

Balancing the budget on the backs of workers

Across the country, state and local public employees are bearing the brunt of a \$50 billion cumulative budget deficit caused by the recession, skyrocketing health care costs, staggering unemployment and years of tax giveaways to wealthy individuals and large corporations. The biggest factor behind the red ink is diminishing federal aid to states as more and more money—at least \$70 billion so far—is targeted for homeland security. States have used up two-thirds of their cash on hand and "rainy-day funds" trying to cope with budget crises, according to a survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Many state and local governments are seeking to balance the budgets on the backs of working families, cutting jobs and vital community services. In Illinois, Gov. George Ryan (R) plugged a \$1.5 billion shortfall by eliminating 7,000 jobs through layoffs, closing two prisons and cutting funds for vitally needed services such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes.

In Florida, a combination of massive tax cuts and a loss of \$350 million in pension funds invested in Enron Corp. stock left the state with few resources. Since Sept. 11, Florida has cut more than \$1 billion from education, says Florida AFL-CIO President Cindy Hall.

The struggles state and local workers are facing one year after Sept. 11 is a result of the federal government "offloading a lot of expenses to the states," says Elaine Bernard, executive director of Harvard University's Trade Union Program.

The situation also shows workers who their real friends are, she says. "The unions were there for the workers and they still are. The government was there to applaud and give a moment of recognition. But then it's not around when these workers are in need. It just shows the importance of people organizing themselves and having their own programs." @



Cutting to the point: Union activists and allies ultimately were successful in keeping Stanley Works from reincorporating in Bermuda.

~~NO MORE~~ **BUSINESS AS USUAL**

BY JANE BIRNBAUM

When corporations behave badly, working families pay the price. After telecommunications giant WorldCom Inc. disclosed \$3.9 billion in hidden debt in July and another \$3.3 billion in accounting errors in August, it surpassed Enron Corp. as the nation's biggest bankruptcy, obliterating 17,000 jobs and \$25 billion from collectively bargained pension plans nationwide. California Public Employees' Retirement System, the nation's largest pension fund, lost \$600 million after WorldCom shares plummeted from nearly \$65 a share in 1999 to less than a nickel today.

Failing to respond after insider self-dealing destroyed Enron, President George W. Bush and Congress finally were moved by the WorldCom disaster to approve major Democratic-sponsored accounting reforms that union shareholder activists long have championed. As shareholders with a collective \$6 trillion in union-sponsored pension funds, as voters and as the ultimate victims of badly governed corporations, union members are uniquely positioned to lead the fight for corporate governance.

"The labor movement is coming after everyone infected by greed and all those who aid and abet them in Wall Street and Washington," says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka.

The work has just begun. Still needed are reforms to protect workers whose retirement depends on risky individual 401(k) accounts, legislation putting workers at the front of the line in corporate bankruptcies, accounting of stock options as costs that reduce profits and shareholder value and an end to corporations unpatriotically avoiding taxes by reincorporating on paper overseas.

While pressing for tax haven reform in Congress, union activists highlighted the actions of New Britain, Conn.-based toolmaker Stanley Works to reincorporate in Bermuda and avoid paying U.S. taxes. Stanley Works executives claimed the change would save about \$30 million annually in taxes. But it also would have diluted rights of shareholders and required them, including Machinist retirees, to pay capital gains taxes on shares they would be forced by law to sell.

Following rallies, shareholder action, e-campaigns and calls by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and other union leaders for the company to halt reincorporation plans, Stanley reversed course in August, announcing it would remain in the United States.

"Shareholders and Congress must rein in corporate insiders who hurt retiree security and avoid paying their fair share of taxes in wartime by scurrying overseas on paper," says Machinists President Thomas Buffenbarger, whose union represents 500 workers at Stanley.

ILENE PERJAN

Unions and union-sponsored pension funds have led the way on corporate governance reforms, filing approximately 600 related shareholder proposals since 1999, according to worker retirement funds consultant Proxy Voter Services. On July 16, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan told the Senate Banking Committee that "infectious greed" among executives loaded with stock options had driven them to fake profits that inflate share prices. Unions were among the first to sound the alarm on the effects of excessive CEO compensation in 1997, when the AFL-CIO launched its "Executive PayWatch" website (www.aflcio.org/paywatch/index.htm).

In the wake of Greenspan's July speech, the Senate voted 97-0 for a broad accounting reform bill sponsored by Maryland's Democratic Sen. Paul Sarbanes. But the bill's unanimous passage was not for lack of Bush administration opposition. When the Senate Banking Committee first voted on the measure, federal Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chairman Harvey Pitt

met with Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) in an unsuccessful effort to reduce support for the bill among committee Republicans.

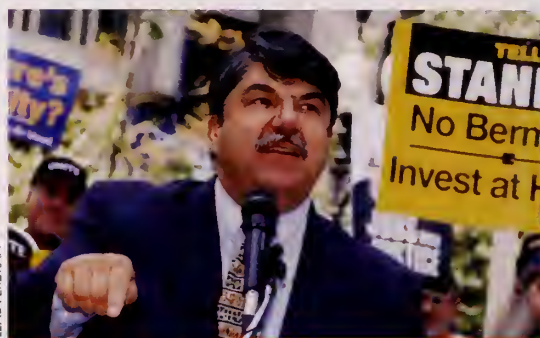
Senate and House negotiators reconciled the Sarbanes bill with a much-weaker Republican bill the House passed in April, and produced a measure resembling the Senate's. On July 25, the Senate passed it 99-0 and the House gave it a 423-3 endorsement. Signed by Bush, it creates a

regulatory board with investigative and enforcement powers to oversee the accounting industry and discipline corrupt auditors.

Independent auditing just the beginning

Unions have long called for auditor independence. In December 2001, when there already existed a string of audit failures among corporations using accounting firms with conflicting self-interests, the AFL-CIO made a formal auditor independence proposal to an unresponsive Pitt. During the Clinton administration, unions supported then-SEC Chairman Arthur Levitt's efforts to promote auditor independence. But Levitt was stymied by the accounting industry, which successfully lobbied Congress to water down his proposals into small disclosures on corporate proxy statements.

First appearing in 2001, those disclosures provided sufficient ammunition for a group of building trades unions, including the Electrical Workers, the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters and the Sheet Metal Workers, to file



Standing tough: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka joined activists in Boston to demand Fidelity disclose how it votes on behalf of shareholders.

Holding Lawmakers Accountable for Corporate Reform

By destroying thousands of jobs and billions in retirement savings, WorldCom and Enron underscore the need for legislators to support corporate governance reform that protects working families' financial security. And with Labor Day kicking off the election season, union activists are working to educate and mobilize voters around corporate governance issues—efforts that will culminate Oct. 19 with a "No More Business As Usual" day of action nationwide.

Union activists launched the "No More Business As Usual" campaign this spring, with town hall meetings featuring laid-off Enron workers in more than a dozen cities. In July, activists rallied at national events, including New York's July 30 "Take Main Street to Wall Street" event.

At a July 31 protest at Fidelity Investments in Boston, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and union activists urged the mutual fund giant to disclose how it votes on behalf of shareholders on such issues as CEO compensation. Building on the momentum, activists in August took their corporate reform message to congressional districts across the country, urging candidates to hold corporations accountable.

New York City Labor Council activists say shaping messages for fall campaigning got a boost when they brainstormed for the July 30 event in which AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney took the union movement's message of corporate accountability to Wall Street.

"We discussed the neighborhood buzz that people are worried they won't be able to retire," says Kate Ferranti, public relations director of the labor council. "In message development, it's important to hit what average working people are thinking."

In Milwaukee, worksite coordinators for the November elections began distributing a survey in July asking members about their interest in eight potential issues, including two regarding corporate governance. By Labor Day, participants in the Milwaukee County Labor Council's annual festival were donning "No More Business As Usual" T-shirts, while Milwaukee activists spoke in more than 100 houses of worship during Labor in the Pulpit services, prepped for their discussions with AFL-CIO corporate governance talking points.

In Connecticut, where activists participated with Sweeney and IAM President Thomas Buffenbarger in a successful July 29 protest against toolmaker Stanley Works, the Connecticut AFL-CIO is educating voters about Democratic Rep. James Maloney's backing of legislation to close offshore reincorporation tax loopholes.

"We want to remind our members about the damage these companies do and which politicians have helped the corporations and which are prepared to fight for working families," says Connecticut AFL-CIO Communications Director Larry Dorman.



On the street: Workers took the union movement's message about the need for corporate reform to Wall Street.

more than 30 auditor independence shareholder proposals in this year's proxy season. In February, the UA S&P 400 Index Fund achieved a huge win at Walt Disney Company. Even before the vote was tallied, Disney executives announced auditors would perform only audit-related work.

While suddenly auditor independence seems unquestionably necessary, other needed reforms still lack common sense recognition. For instance, Congress continues to bow to high-tech companies and other firms that resist treating executive stock options as costs against profits.

With massive stock option grants, executives can buy stock at pre-set prices. After they buy the stock, they can sell it and pocket the difference—which the company pays—between the lower and higher price.

"Stock options are hugely important because companies give hundreds of millions of them to CEOs, which devalues the stock of other shareholders without their realizing it," says Ron Richardson, Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees general vice president and Council for Institutional Investors board secretary.

In 1994, unions and union pension funds supported a proposal from the quasi-governmental Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) requiring companies to expense options. But the high-tech industry successfully lobbied Congress to stifle FASB. Now joined by the Bush administration, the industry again is opposing measures sponsored by Sens. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.) to force corporations to treat options as expenses or make FASB address the issue within a year.

"Investors need companies to expense options so they have a clearer picture of their financial status," says SMWIA General President Michael Sullivan. "If Congress and the SEC won't make this happen, union-sponsored pension funds will have to do the job through shareholder resolutions."

Stopping corporate tax dodgers

Another critical factor in ensuring corporate governance is a bill co-sponsored by Reps. Jim Maloney (D-Conn.) and Richard Neal (D-Mass.) that would end financial incentives for U.S. corporations to reincorporate in foreign tax havens such as Bermuda where they can undermine shareholder rights and avoid paying U.S. taxes. Five years ago, when the AFL-CIO sponsored a



JONATHAN OLSON

Take Action

- Fax your senators in support of S. 1992 for 401(k) retirement security reform by clicking on www.unionvoice.org/campaign/s1992.
- Keep up with the AFL-CIO "No More Business As Usual" campaign and get campaign T-shirts and other materials at www.aflcio.org or call 800-442-5465.
- Fax your senator a letter in support of S. 2820, which raises from \$4,650 to \$13,500 the amount a worker can claim in corporate bankruptcy.

proposal opposing Bermuda reincorporation by the now-embattled Tyco International Ltd., it barely registered with shareholders.

But this June, a Bermuda reincorporation proposal from the management of

Delaware-based Nabors Industries Ltd., the world's largest oil drilling company, drew support from only 66 percent of outstanding shares in the face of opposition from the Amalgamated Bank, the AFL-CIO, the Central Laborers' Pension Fund and the Laborers.

In response to the many Enron and WorldCom workers whose retirements plans were wiped out, a bill sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) would give employees a strong voice in the governance of their company defined-contribution retirement plans, commonly known as 401(k)s, and limit the amount of the employer's stock in those plans at companies that do not also offer solid traditional defined-benefit pension plans.

Ultimately, the crash of the Enron Economy validates unions' advocacy of traditional pension plans for retirement security.

"Corporations sold 401(k)s as 'worker empowerment,' just as Wall Street and its allies now push private Social Security accounts," says Michael Fanning, CEO of the Central Pension of the International Union of Operating Engineers and participating employers. "Now everyone understands how poor corporate governance can directly ruin retirement security for untold numbers of employees, shareholders and pensioners. We need reform now." @

The AFL-CIO Action Agenda for Corporate Reform

- 1 We call on the SEC and the stock exchanges to enact a single new higher listing standard for corporate governance for publicly traded companies. That standard must require companies to expense and index stock options they give CEOs—or ban them outright. It must prohibit CEOs from selling their company stock while in office. It must give workers and their pension funds the real power to choose corporate directors who are genuinely independent of CEOs. It must outlaw the use of offshore tax havens.
- 2 We call on Congress to write these standards into law. Congress also should move immediately to approve legislative proposals that put workers in the front of the line in bankruptcy proceedings and make genuine pension reform the first order of business when Congress returns this fall.
- 3 The AFL-CIO will take legal action on behalf of the 17,000 laid-off WorldCom workers to get the severance they are owed. (A similar suit for laid-off Enron workers won an unprecedented \$34 million for the workers.)
- 4 The AFL-CIO will undertake a campaign to use the power of more than \$6 trillion in workers' pension funds invested in American corporations to insist on higher standards of corporate behavior and change "business as usual" on Wall Street. Union funds will demand corporate accountability through shareholder, cyber and street action.
- 5 The AFL-CIO will demand political accountability by mobilizing 13 million union voters as well as family members—including an aggressive voter information and mobilization campaign based on the records of candidates on corporate accountability.

To see the full AFL-CIO Reform Agenda, visit www.aflcio.org.

An Agenda for All America

Campaign 2002 Issues Guide

BY MIKE HALL

With the Bush administration and Republican-dominated U.S. House of Representatives doing the bidding of Big Business, the nation's agenda has become a corporate agenda. In recent months:

- Powerful pharmaceutical companies blocked passage of a comprehensive Medicare prescription drug benefit.
- Giant corporations have joined the Bush administration's fierce fight to win Fast Track trade authority and expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to Central and South America.
- Wall Street lobbyists and influence peddlers, eager to rake in big fees under a privatized Social Security system, have backed a Bush-appointed commission's calls for siphoning Social Security funds into risky individual accounts.
- Congress passed a Bush administration corporate wish list that includes whopping tax breaks for Big Business, a millionaire tax cut and a bailout for the airline industry, with nothing for the workers who lost jobs as a result of Sept. 11.

In this fall's congressional elections, with the public increasingly distrustful of corporations and fearful about the plummeting economy, working families have the opportunity to transform the nation's Big Business agenda into *An Agenda for All America*—one that ensures working families have access to affordable prescription medication, a secure retirement, good jobs and quality schools.



Secure retirement: Union activists are demanding that candidates on the campaign trail take a strong stand against privatizing Social Security.

Rebuilding America

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, working family lawmakers backed a \$20 billion package of projects as part of an economic stimulus package to help rebuild the nation's crumbling infrastructure—roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, railroads and airports. The Bush administration and Republican congressional leaders killed the initiative.

This year, the Bush budget cut \$8.5 billion from critical highway spending in a move that transportation groups say could cost as many as 320,000 jobs. The Highway Funding Restoration Act (H.R. 3694 and S. 1917) would restore more than half of that and preserve about 180,000 jobs.

Two other major bills before Congress—water infrastructure (H.R. 3930) and school construction (H.R. 1076)—are under attack by congressional Republicans to remove Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage protections. The Bush administration also has waged a successful legal battle to ban Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) on federally funded construction projects. PLAs set common work rules on such projects.

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ Urge your candidates to support rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, Davis-Bacon wage standards and Project Labor Agreements.

Creating Good Jobs and Safe Workplaces

Since the Bush administration took office, nearly 1.5 million jobs have been lost, most in manufacturing. Flawed trade policies such as the Bush administration's Fast Track trade authority initiative and a hemisphere-wide expansion of NAFTA through the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) could cost even more jobs.

Ensuring good jobs are created, not lost, also calls for ensuring that work pays family supportive wages for all workers. In 2001, the average woman was paid just 73 cents for every \$1 a man was paid. To overcome the disparity, the AFL-CIO backs the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 77 and H.R. 781), which calls for equal pay for equivalent work.

Good jobs also mean safe jobs. Yet one of the Bush administration's first acts was to urge repeal of the nation's new ergonomics standard designed to prevent crippling workplace repetitive stress injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. In response, the AFL-CIO and other job safety advocates support

legislation (S. 2184) that would require the Bush administration to issue a protective ergonomics standard within two years.

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ *Urge your candidates to stand up for good jobs by opposing FTAA, supporting equal pay and establishing a workplace ergonomics standard.*

Safeguarding Retirement

The recent stock market nosedive should serve as warning against privatizing Social Security, which would entail shifting funds from the nation's most successful family protection program into 401(k)s and other risky investments that are not guaranteed—and that unlike Social Security would not provide disability and survivor's income. As the fall campaigns heat up, Republican campaign documents indicate Republican candidates and Bush administration officials will continue to conceal the recommendations by the president's own Social Security commission to privatize Social Security, drain the program of needed funds, cut guaranteed benefits and raise the retirement age. Those proposals will resurface following elections.

The AFL-CIO supports legislation (S. 1992) offered by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) that enhances retirement security by requiring companies that do not provide defined-benefit retirement plans guaranteed by the federal government to be more prudent in designing their 401(k) plans. It also calls for reforms in 401(k) law by requiring elected worker representatives on the retirement plans' boards of trustees who would participate in choosing the plans' investment options. The bill also prevents employers from overloading 401(k) plans with company stock and requires that workers receive independent investment advice and be informed of executive stock sales.

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ *Urge your candidates to support strengthening, not privatizing, Social Security and to back new laws that give workers genuine retirement investment protection.*

Ensuring Quality Health Care

Prescription drug prices are forcing many seniors to choose between medicine and basic necessities, such as food. A Medicare prescription drug benefit—administered by Medicare, not insurance companies or HMOs—would help the nation's seniors afford the medicines they need. Senate Republicans, with the support of the Bush administration, pushed for a plan delivered by the HMO industry that would leave most seniors without coverage.

Working families need a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that lets doctors, not HMOs, make health care decisions and gives patients legal rights to appeal HMO actions. The Senate in 2001 passed a bill with such patient protections (S. 1052), but it is opposed by the Bush White House and Republican congressional leaders.

Some 43 million Americans, including 10 million children, have no health coverage. The state-based Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that provides care for uninsured children should be expanded to serve more children and also extended to their parents.

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ *Urge your candidates to support a Medicare prescription drug benefit administered by Medicare, not by private insurance companies or HMOs, a strong Patients' Bill of Rights like S. 1052 and the expansion of the state CHIP.*

Improving and Protecting Quality Public Schools

In July, the U.S. Supreme Court opened the gate to some school voucher programs, which siphon funds from public schools and the 90 percent of the nation's children who attend public schools. While most private schools are not held to the same standards and accountability as public schools, public schools lack the funds for desperately needed repair and modernization. On average, school facilities are more than 40 years old and in need of restoration or replacement to accommodate a growing student population, reduce class size and provide modern classrooms.

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ *Urge your candidates to support rebuilding and modernizing public schools and to oppose private school vouchers.*

Holding Corporations Accountable

It took Enron Corp., WorldCom, Arthur Andersen and dozens of other corporate accounting scandals—with the accompanying loss of jobs, retirement and health care for tens of thousands of workers—before President George W. Bush and Congress finally approved major Democratic-sponsored accounting reforms that union shareholder activists long have championed.

But much remains to be done. The AFL-CIO Action Agenda for Corporate Reform (see page 14) is calling for, in part, the SEC and the stock exchanges to enact a single new higher listing standard for corporate governance for publicly traded companies and for Congress to write these standards into law. The new SEC standard must require companies to expense and index stock options they give CEOs—or ban them outright. It must prohibit CEOs from selling their company stock while in office. It must give workers and their pension funds the real power to choose corporate directors who are genuinely independent of CEOs. It must outlaw the use of offshore tax havens. It must put workers at the front of the line in corporate bankruptcy proceedings.

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ *Urge your candidates to hold lawmakers accountable for corporate reform. For a full copy of the AFL-CIO Action Agenda for Corporate Reform, visit www.aflcio.org.*

Guaranteeing the Freedom to Form a Union

Employers routinely violate workers' efforts to improve their lives through unions. Illegal firings, intimidation, expensive anti-union campaigns and threats to shut down are commonplace. Elected leaders can play an important role in defending workers' freedom to form unions by showing their support for the workers and their disapproval of employer harassment, coercion and lawbreaking. @

Action ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ *Urge candidates to publicly support workers' freedom to choose a union by issuing public statements, attending rallies and intervening to stop employer harassment and intimidation of workers struggling to form unions. Tell them to oppose any weakening of the National Labor Relations Act and the National Labor Relations Board and to support civil service and collective bargaining rights for federal workers in any new homeland security department.*

A Placebo for Reform

The U.S. House leadership chose a placebo over a real Medicare prescription drug bill. Now they'll try to convince voters otherwise.

BY MIKE HALL

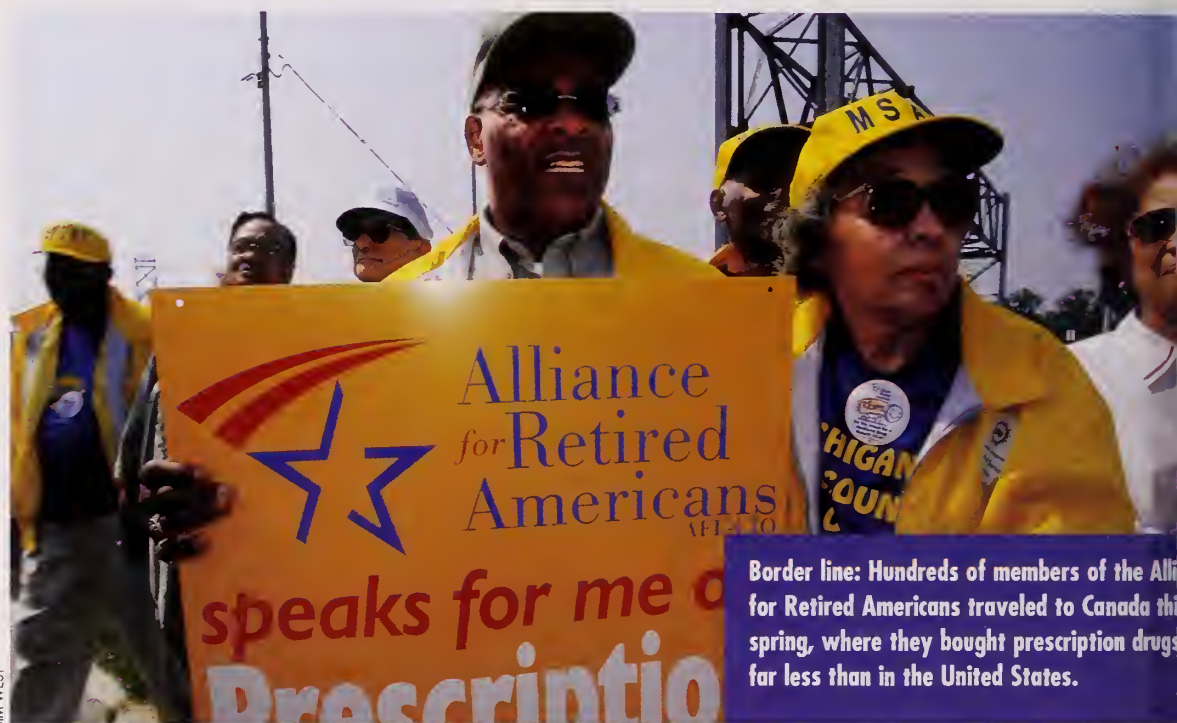
Hours after midnight on June 28, House Republican leaders chalked up two victories for the drug industry. First, they wouldn't even allow a vote on a Democratic-backed Medicare prescription drug benefit bill supported by senior citizen groups, consumer organizations, unions and other working family advocates. That bill would help all seniors pay for prescriptions as a benefit within the proven Medicare program. Next, under the guise of providing prescription medication assistance for seniors, the Republican-controlled House maneuvered to pass a bill written by the HMO and pharmaceutical industries—a bill designed to thwart rather than facilitate real benefits.

In passing the drug industry bill, House leaders and the Bush White House crowed they had created a Medicare prescription drug benefit—a boast they will make forcefully and often between now and Election Day, Nov. 5, with the help of a pharmaceutical industry-funded major television ad campaign.

But experts say the bill is a sham and a distressing example of special interest control of legislators.

"Seniors without drug coverage expecting a substantial reduction in out-of-pocket expenses may be surprised by the details of the benefit structure," says Kenneth Thorpe, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University.

Others are more forceful in criticizing the House-approved plan, which passed largely along party lines. Alliance for Retired Americans President George Kourpias calls it "a hoax and fraud—a total sellout by the



JIM WEST

Border line: Hundreds of members of the Alliance for Retired Americans traveled to Canada this spring, where they bought prescription drugs far less than in the United States.

insurance and pharmaceutical industries."

Partisan party politics in the Senate slammed the door shut on a Medicare prescription drug benefit when Republicans, with Bush administration backing, blocked a Democratic bill that would have provided all seniors with affordable Medicare drug coverage. But Republican senators failed in their efforts to pass a bill similar to the House version.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney says the Republican House-passed bill was "intended by their own internal documents to confuse voters. To pretend to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare gives new meaning to 'election year cynicism.'"

But working family voters can apply a little "election year savvy," and hold those lawmakers accountable, by electing candidates who will pass comprehensive and guaranteed Medicare prescription drug legislation.

Millions of seniors without coverage

Under the prescription drug benefit proposed by House Democrats, which the leadership killed by using parliamentary maneuvers that prevented the bill from coming to a vote, seniors' prescription medication coverage would have been provided through Medicare and the benefits would have been guaranteed to all 39 million Medicare beneficiaries.

In sharp contrast, the Republican plan "deliberately bypasses the Medicare program," according to a report by the non-profit health care consumer group Families USA. "It seeks to induce private insurance companies to sell prescription drug policies rather than provide this coverage through the Medicare program," the report states.

Offering few guidelines, the Republican plan simply subsidizes private insurers and HMOs that may decide to participate. HMOs and "insurance companies would be

free to vary the benefit, jack up the premium and even exit the marketplace, just as Medicare HMOs disappoint millions of seniors when they decided to close shop," says Gail Shearer, director of health policy analysis for the Washington, D.C., office of Consumers Union.

The House-passed bill includes no guarantee that private insurance companies will offer prescription drug policies. Even the drug industry group, the Health Insurance Association of America, is on record saying policies such as those on which the Republicans' plan is based are not viable because only people with high prescription medication costs would buy them—and, as a result, insurance companies would make those policies prohibitively expensive.

In fact, previous experiments to enlist private insurance companies and HMOs to provide care for seniors have failed. Since 1998, HMOs in droves have left the Medicare+Choice program—designed to move seniors into managed care HMOs. Of the 346 HMO plans in Medicare+Choice in 1998, 168 left the program, abandoning 2 million seniors, according to studies by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund (two foundations that support research on health care issues).

While the plan backed by House Republicans sets target benefit levels, there is no guarantee private insurers and HMOs would match those levels because Medicare would not administer the plan.

"The HMO decides how much the plan costs, which drugs are included and whether or not to offer coverage for seniors," says Alliance for Retired Americans Executive Director Edward Coyle.

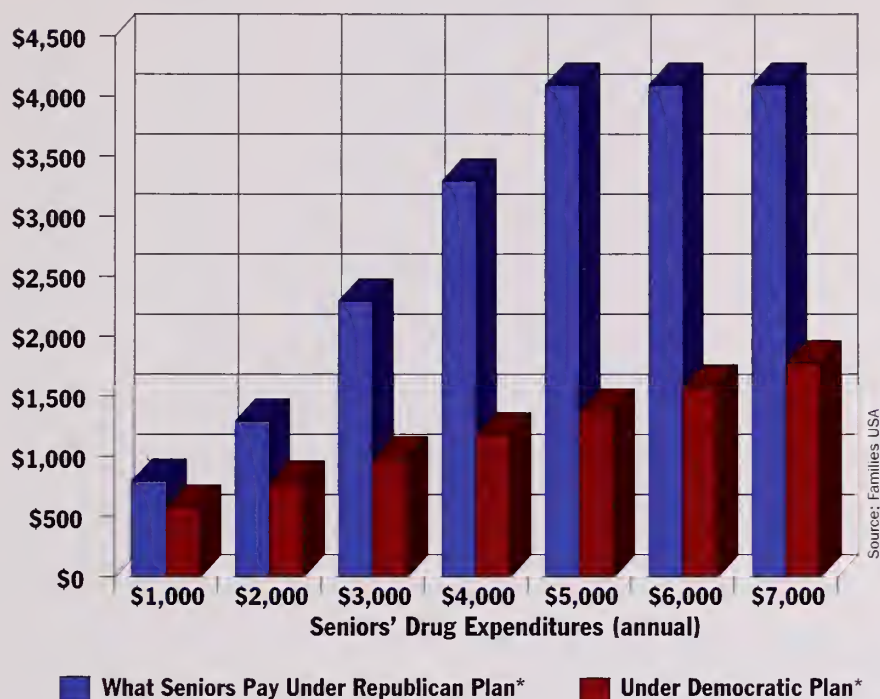
Seniors pay far more under the Republican plan

Even if private insurers and HMOs followed the Republican plan's benefit levels, seniors would pay far more for prescription drugs than under the plan by House Democrats.

"The [Republican] House proposal would require seniors to pay for the overwhelming

Out-of-Pocket Costs for Seniors Under Democratic and Republican Rx Plans

Note: The Republican plan would be run by HMOs and insurers rather than the proven Medicare program, making its benefits uncertain.



*Includes the annual premium costs associated with prescription coverage (\$396 per year for the Republican plan and \$300 per year for the Democratic plan).

majority of their drug bills," the Families USA study notes. The Republican bill would cost seniors at least a \$396 annual premium and carry a \$250 annual deductible. After reaching the deductible, seniors would pay 20 percent of the cost up to \$1,000, then be forced to pick up 50 percent of the costs between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

But the plan's biggest failure, experts say, is its "doughnut"—the hole in which seniors would not have prescription medication coverage and would be forced to pay for all prescription drugs costing more than \$2,000 until they hit the equivalent of \$4,900 in total drug costs. Thorpe's study estimates that some 10.2 million seniors would fall through that hole.

In contrast, the Democratic plan carried a \$25 a month premium and a \$100 deductible. It would pay 80 percent of prescription costs up to \$2,000 and pick up 100 percent of drug costs beyond \$2,000.

Under the House Republican plan, a senior with \$3,000 in annual medication costs still would pay 77 percent in out-of-pocket costs, or \$2,296, for prescription drugs. Under the Democratic Medicare prescription drug bill, a senior with the same \$3,000 annual medication expenses would save \$2,020 a year and reduce out-of-pocket expenses to just \$980 (see chart).

No control on drug costs

Seniors on fixed incomes aren't the only ones struggling to pay for life-saving prescription drugs that have risen in price by more than 15 percent a year, or five times the rate of inflation for the past several years, according to the government agency that administers Medicare and Medicaid.

It's no wonder that more and more U.S. residents cross the Canadian border to fill prescriptions, because Canada's cost containment policies keep drug prices more affordable—about 60 percent of U.S. levels. Just this spring, 375 seniors took part in a series of Alliance-sponsored bus trips to Canada and purchased their needed drugs at discounts that would save them some \$500,000 annually.

But the House-passed plan does nothing to rein in the soaring costs of prescription drugs, which is the major reason the drug industry has been the nation's most profitable for the past decade. Because of its lack of cost containment, "if the House GOP bill became law, it's likely that drug prices would continue to skyrocket," according to Families USA.

On the other hand, because the Democratic plan called for Medicare to run the prescription drug benefit, Medicare could use its purchasing power to leverage better drug prices from drug companies. The Democratic plan also called for the end of certain drug industry practices that keep cheaper generic drugs off the market. A separate Senate bill that called for some of those generic reforms was approved by the Senate in July but has not been acted on by the House.

This fall, union leaders say working families should be alert when viewing campaign commercials touting the House Republican prescription drug bill or when listening to Republican House incumbents brag about their efforts on behalf of seniors.

Says Kourpias: "The proposal is a political placebo designed to give election year coverage to candidates without making meaningful Medicare reform or addressing the issue of rapidly rising drug prices." @

A Drive for Justice

UAW membership strength in the automotive sector—the union's core industry—was key to Johnson Control workers' efforts to form a union

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

After suffering pay cuts at previous jobs and watching co-workers get fired for no reason, Troy Redhawk told himself, "If I ever have the chance to join a union, I will." Redhawk, who builds dashboards for Jeep Libertys in Northwood, Ohio, at Johnson Controls Inc., one of the nation's largest auto parts manufacturers, got that chance in June. He and 700 other workers at four Johnson Controls plants went on strike and ultimately won contracts that boosted wages and benefits at three plants and guaranteed that another 8,000 workers at 26 other plants would have the opportunity to choose a union free from employer interference through a company-wide neutrality and card-check agreement the UAW negotiated.

Many workers at companies that make parts for cars and trucks do not have a voice at work with a union and struggle with low wages and high turnover. The thousands of workers who assemble vehicles at the Big Three automakers—General Motors (GM), Ford and DaimlerChrysler—have had a voice on the job for decades with UAW, with solid wages and benefits that built the foundation for strong communities. But in



Victory: Employees at Johnson Controls in Northwood, Ohio, celebrate a new contract that will make it easier for workers at other Johnson Controls plants to gain a voice at work.

ANDY MORRISON/THE TOLEDO BLADE

“America needs unions as a check against bosses’ decisions that ignore the rights of workers.”

—UAW President Ron Gettelfinger

the 1980s, the automakers increasingly spun off their parts-making operations or outsourced the work to nonunion firms where wages were lower and benefits minimal. With no voice on the job, workers at the parts firms suffered. In 1998, UAW launched a long-term strategic campaign to help those workers win a voice on the job. This spring, the workers at Johnson Controls won a critical victory in that ongoing effort.

“It is a breakthrough and a significant victory,” says Sean McAlinden, chief economist at the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor, Mich. “UAW has many successes ahead of them in terms of parts plants,” he says, noting that with about 800,000 workers employed at parts plants, it is the largest manufacturing industry in the United States.

UAW membership strength in the automotive sector—the union’s core industry—bolstered Johnson Control workers’ efforts to form a union. UAW leaders persuaded GM and DaimlerChrysler to convince top Johnson Controls management of the value of a positive relationship with the UAW. Union leaders also informed members at the auto assembly plants that buy parts from Johnson Controls about the problems workers were having with management. When the strike took place, UAW members at GM and DaimlerChrysler understood that the rights of their brothers and sisters at Johnson Controls were at stake and were prepared to offer strong support. “GM employees who are UAW, they helped us,” says Dave Williams, a member of the UAW bargaining committee at Johnson Controls’ Oklahoma City plant. “They brought food, money, everything we needed. I couldn’t ask for a better bunch of people than the UAW.”

“For many years now, workers at nonunion auto plants have benefited from the upward pressure on wages and benefits created by our auto contracts,” says Ron Gettelfinger, UAW’s newly elected president. “But we have already felt the downward impact of declining union density in the parts sector. We are working to reverse that trend. Organizing is every UAW member’s job.”

Redhawk and the other Northwood plant employees won union representation through card-check recognition. Card-check, in which an employer agrees to



REBECCA COOK

recognize a union if a majority of workers sign cards requesting union representation, bypasses the often lengthy and contentious election process regularly abused by employers seeking to harass and intimidate workers. An overwhelming 85 percent majority signed cards at Northwood. “It was a long struggle,” says Redhawk, who is heartened that Johnson Controls workers at 25 other plants will have the freedom to choose a union through the card-check process. “I hope it’s smooth sailing for the others,” he says.

“Organizing is tough, but the difficult challenges we face in a climate that is hostile will not deter our commitment,” says Gettelfinger. “America needs unions as a check against bosses’ decisions that ignore the rights of workers.”

Building on union strength

For years, workers at Johnson Controls tried to exercise their freedom to form unions. But the company—like so many in every type of workplace in the United States—thwarted employees’ basic rights.

Such employer tactics are common. During organizing campaigns, almost all employers—92 percent—require employees to attend mandatory meetings against the union, and 78 percent of employers force employees to attend one-on-one meetings against the union with managers, according to research by Cornell University scholar Kate Bronfenbrenner.

The union filed many charges against Johnson Controls with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), accusing the company of unfairly disciplining union

supporters, changing work rules without getting workers’ input and failing to bargain in good faith. At one plant, contract talks dragged on for 22 months after the workers voted for their union. By June 12 this year, workers were fed up. That day, hundreds of UAW members at Johnson Controls plants in Shreveport, La.; Earth City, Mo.; and Oklahoma City went on strike, protesting unfair labor practices. So did workers at the Northwood, Ohio, plant.

Within two days, two GM and three DaimlerChrysler plants ran out of parts to build their most popular and fastest-selling cars and trucks. U.S. manufacturers increasingly rely on “just in time” inventory systems—back ordering and storing parts to last only a few days, a tactic that saves money but also makes manufacturers vulnerable to interruptions in supplies. “Companies used to be able to wait out a union for 30 or 40 days,” says the Center for Automotive Research’s McAlinden. “Now, they can’t.” Says Gettelfinger: “We’re not afraid to use a point of leverage we have to support our members and to support workers who want UAW representation.”

Building on victory

Only two days after going on strike, the workers won a landmark victory. At the three union plants, they negotiated a four-year contract with a \$1,500 signing bonus, wage increases of \$3 per hour, improved health care benefits and a substantial pension.

Within a month, majorities of workers at several more Johnson Controls plants signed cards indicating their desire for a union—and now have a voice on the job. Johnson Controls “wasted a lot of time trying to figure out ways to deny workers their right to join a union,” says Lloyd Mahaffey, director of UAW Region 2B, which includes Ohio. “I think their new approach, which respects workers’ rights, is going to be much more productive.”

The UAW’s win extends beyond the strong contract the workers achieved. It also is bolstering workers’ solidarity with each other. “We’re ready to pack our bags and take vacation days to help others,” says Redhawk. “Any time any union needs our help, we will help them. We’ll be there.” @

Supreme Court Isn't the Only One to Watch

Last March, unions and civil rights groups blasted the U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling that an undocumented worker was not entitled to back pay after his employer illegally fired him for union activity (*Hoffman Plastic Compounds v. National Labor Relations Board*). But in addition to the prospect of more such rulings if President George W. Bush nominates a conservative activist to the high court, union activists also recognize the importance of judges in lower federal courts.

Like Supreme Court justices, federal district and appeals court judges are nominated by the president and, if confirmed by the U.S. Senate, serve for life. And because the Supreme Court only hears a small percentage of cases, federal district and circuit court judges often have the final word in deciding issues that directly affect America's workers. The federal district courts' 665 judges hear cases involving the enforcement of collective bargaining agreements and cases under the Fair Labor Standards Acts, the Americans with Disabilities Act and other discrimination laws, the Family and Medical Leave Act and other core workplace laws. Employer challenges to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) decisions go straight to one of 13 U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals.

In 2000, a Connecticut federal district judge ruled that jet manufacturer Pratt & Whitney's contract with Machinists District 91 (now District 26) prohibited it from moving work from East Hartford to nonunion shops in Arkansas, Texas and Arizona. Further, the judge issued an injunction—which meant trucks carrying manufacturing equipment literally had to turn around and head back to Connecticut.

"Before our experience, we didn't realize how important these judges are to working families," says District 26 assistant directing business representative Jim Parent.

Balance on the bench

Employers and their Republican allies long have recognized the importance of lifetime appointments to the federal courts, and with Bush at the helm, they're eager to win fast approval of their judicial nominees. At a May press conference, Republicans expressed indignation that some Bush nom-



inees had waited a year for a Democratic-led Senate Judiciary Committee hearing (typically the first step before committee and full Senate votes on nominees).

But the Republicans didn't mention that 53 well-qualified Clinton nominees *never* got a hearing when their party led the judiciary committee during most of the Clinton administration. Even Bush's own counsel, Alberto Gonzalez, told CNN in August 2001 that "the conduct of the Republican senators" in delaying and refusing to vote on Clinton nominees was "improper" and "wrong." But that hasn't stopped Senate Republicans from pushing for quick confirmation of Bush's D.C. Circuit nominees—particularly conservative lawyer Miguel Estrada, whose appointment, legal observers believe, could tip the balance of the court.

Now led by Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, judiciary committee Democrats—with only a 10-9 margin—are staying strong, insisting on a careful review of Bush's nominees and refusing to approve those whom they consider extreme. Last March, for instance, the committee considered Charles W. Pickering, Bush's nominee for the Fifth Circuit that covers Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. (Committee Republicans blocked Clinton's nominees, Jorge Rangel and Enrique Moreno, for that circuit.) After hearing Pickering's record—including numerous anti-worker decisions in employment discrimination cases and Pickering's success in persuading prosecutors to drop a charge against a defendant convicted of burning a cross on an interracial couple's lawn—committee members voted along party lines and gave Bush his first judicial defeat.

After the Pickering vote, Bush accused Democrats of prolonging a "vacancy crisis." Leahy responded that "the Senate is not a rubber stamp for any president to remake the federal judiciary along narrow ideological lines."

"It is each senator's responsibility to do his or her best to make sure judges will be fair and impartial," says Leahy. The committee's Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) are calling for a balanced federal bench, while Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) says he refuses "to reward the president's party for the vacancies created by obstructionism during the last six years."

Next up: anti-worker nominee for Fifth Circuit

Now Bush has nominated Priscilla Owen, a former corporate lawyer and current Texas Supreme Court justice, to the Fifth Circuit. "Owen is even to the right of her current court, which is all Republican and consistently hostile to working families," says Richard Levy, the Texas AFL-CIO legal director. Craig McDonald, director of Texans for Public Justice (TPJ), a watchdog group, says when a jury votes in favor of a worker, "Owen does not hesitate to substitute her view of the evidence for the jury's view, and she regularly votes to reverse damage awards to workers."

A broad coalition, including the Texas AFL-CIO, TPJ and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR)—the nation's largest and oldest association of civil and human rights groups—has mobilized to publicize Owen's conservative activism on the bench and to oppose her nomination.

Maintaining balance on the federal bench is extremely important, says LCCR Executive Director Wade Henderson. "Activists in every state should write their senators today, and urge them to insist on fair, impartial and compassionate judges who understand the importance of protecting the rights of working Americans." @

—Jane Birnbaum

To contact your U.S. senators, click on www.senate.gov or call 202-224-3121. For more information, contact the AFL-CIO at 202-637-5188.

Streaming Storytime

Adult readers may not have heard of books like *A Bad Case of Stripes*, *No Mirrors in My Nana's House* or *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, but they are big hits with elementary school children. And now kids can see and hear actors read the books online through a program sponsored by the SAG Foundation.



ed: "Sister, Sister" stars Tia and Tamera Mowry are among SAG's reading program.

Through streaming video, Storyline Online features Screen Actors members such as Sean Astin ("Lord of the Rings"), Jane Kaczmarek ("Malcolm in the Middle") and Tia and Tamera Mowry ("Sister, Sister") reading books aloud.

In the project's test run June 13, SAG President Melissa Gilbert, Mitch Ryan, Elliott Gould, Marcia Smith and Astin gathered at Stoner Avenue Elementary School in Culver City, Calif., to read to students.

Storyline Online builds on the SAG Foundation's BookPALS program, in

which SAG members read books to children in schools and provide literacy opportunities to millions of children.

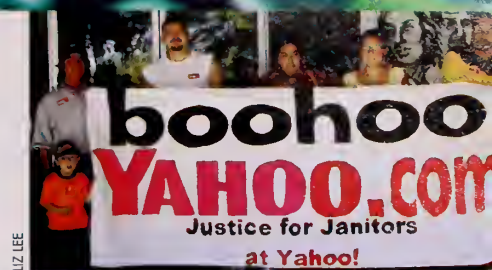
To learn more, visit www.sagfoundation.org. @

Boohoo Yahoo!

Janitors seeking a voice at work at the giant search engine company Yahoo! took their struggle for justice to the most logical dot-com arena: the Internet. In June, they launched www.boohooYahoo.com to win support for their campaign for higher wages and better benefits.

The Silicon Valley corporation—which posted a net income of more than \$21 million in the second quarter of 2002 at a time when other dot-com companies are going belly up—certainly understands how to treat its employees well. Janitor Francisco Casteneda told *The [San Jose, Calif.] Mercury News* that on every floor he cleans, "there's a game room for employees with video games, ping-pong tables and refrigerators full of food." But for the janitors employed by Yahoo! contractor Team Services, it's a much different story. In one of the most expensive regions of the country, janitors who clean Yahoo! offices earn wages of only \$16,000 a year with no access to affordable health insurance—let alone video games and ping-pong tables.

The www.boohooYahoo.com website includes personal stories of janitors, news articles and information on how you can take action to help the dot-com janitors. @



Online: Silicon Valley janitors launched a website to make public the low wages and inadequate access to health care provided by Yahoo! contractor Team Services.

Write On

As communications director for United Teachers of Dade (UTD)/AFT in Florida, Annette Katz has covered Miami-Dade School Board meetings for the union newspaper for 20 years.

But after a year-long wage battle in which the school board sought to cut teachers' pay, School Superintendent Merrett Stierheim issued a "Press Room Procedures" policy. The new rules limited the press room to "individuals employed by a newspaper or broadcast organization intended for general circulation" and pointedly excluded anyone employed by "the various labor unions in any capacity, including those who work for union publications"—strictures that effectively excluded only Katz.

Katz fought back to regain access to the press room where reporters observe board meetings behind large windows, speak to their editors and others by telephone and use lap-



Arrested: UTD/AFT Communications Director Annette Katz surprised to see local police.

tops—but not before being arrested for "trespassing" when she sought access to the press room.

In July, District Court Judge Ursula Ungaro-Benages ordered Stierheim to allow Katz back in the press room, saying that while the school board may regulate access to its press room, it "may not do so based on the content of the publication."

UTD teachers note they are pleased they can continue teaching the U.S. Bill of Rights—and that section of the First Amendment known as freedom of the press. @

No Joke: Real-Life Working Heroes

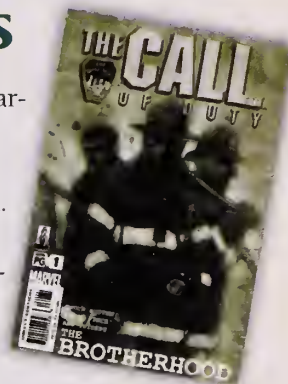
For years, Spider-Man, Captain Marvel and the Incredible Hulk have defined the word "hero" in the world of Marvel Comics. But after Sept. 11, real-life working heroes—firefighters, police and emergency rescue workers—took their place in the pages of the world's largest comic-book publisher. In June, the company launched "The Call" series, featuring Marvel's first new team of heroes in a decade.

"The Call of Duty: The Brotherhood" focuses on life in a New York City firehouse, while "The Call of Duty: The Precinct" highlights police and "The Call of Duty: The Wagon" depicts emergency aid workers. The main characters will join together in a new series starting in December.

"We did three comic-related charity events and raised more than \$1 million for the Twin Towers Fund," says Marvel Comics editor-in-chief Joe Quesada. "We decided that maybe it's time to venture into the area of real world heroes."

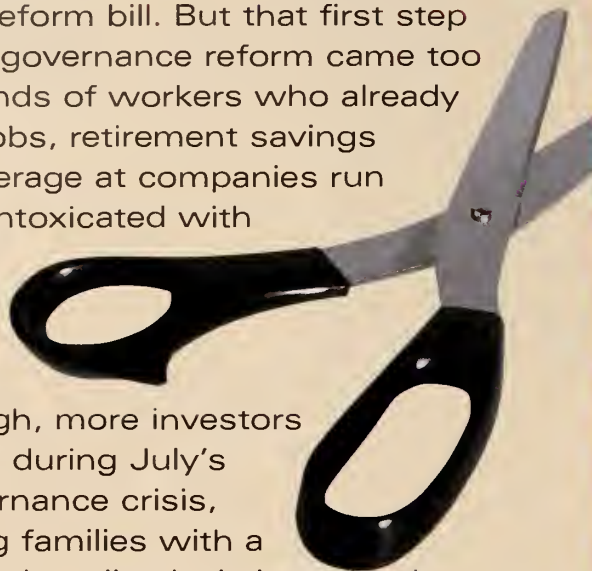
"Our nation's firefighters appreciate this effort to recognize the sacrifices they make every day," says Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger.

For more information, visit www.marvel.com. @



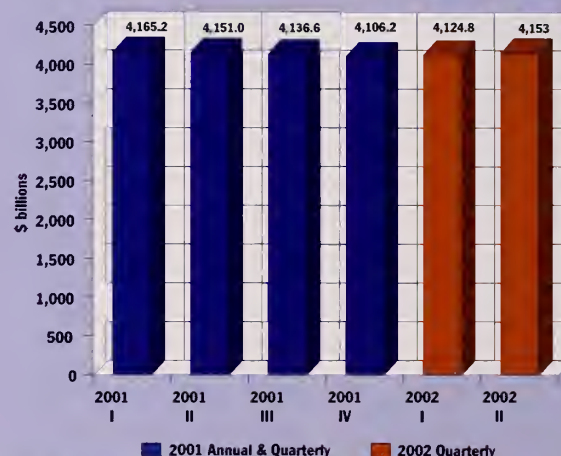
The SAGGING Bottom Line

In late July, Congress finally passed an accounting reform bill. But that first step in corporate governance reform came too late for thousands of workers who already had lost their jobs, retirement savings and health coverage at companies run by executives intoxicated with greed. Fueling stock prices' ongoing descent from a March 2000 high, more investors fled Wall Street during July's corporate governance crisis, leaving working families with a \$1.5 trillion loss in collectively bargained pension funds since 2002. For working families, the bottom line is clear: More critical corporate governance reforms are needed before further jobs and resources disappear.



Working Families' Wages: Going Nowhere

Between the first quarter of 2001 and the second quarter of 2002, wages and salary paid in private U.S. industries were essentially stagnant, according to Department of Commerce data released in early August. Contributing factors include the loss of nearly 1.7 million jobs since March 2001, meager or no pay raises and cut-backs in overtime hours. "When we don't have income growth, that can mean weakening consumption growth, an economic slow-down and rising unemployment," says the EPI's Weller.

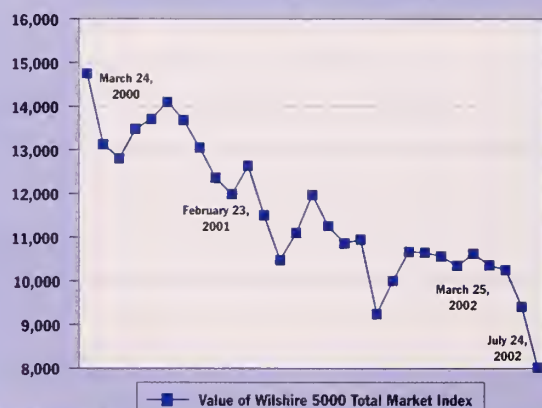


Source: The Dept. of Commerce

The Stock Market Bubble Bursts

Since March 24, 2000, the Wilshire Total Market Index has lost \$7 trillion, draining investor portfolios and working families' pension funds and 401(k) retirement plans. During the bull market of the 1990s, some households grew giddy with paper stock gains and failed to maintain or build a savings buffer. Now they lack sufficient financial resources, says Economic Policy Institute (EPI) economist Christian Weller.

Performance of the Wilshire Total Market Index, the broadest measure of the U.S. stock market



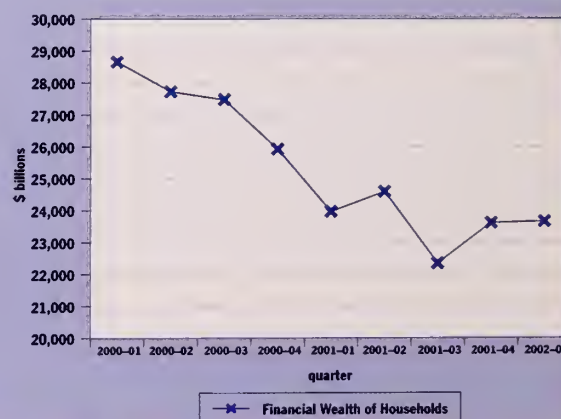
Source: Wilshire Associates Inc.

Household Wealth: Falling Fast

The financial wealth of households has been declining since the first quarter of 2000, as a result of the recession—when consumers increased borrowing—and the burst of the stock price bubble. While numbers for the 2002 second quarter aren't available until the end of September, economists are certain they will dip below first-quarter levels, according to the EPI's Weller:

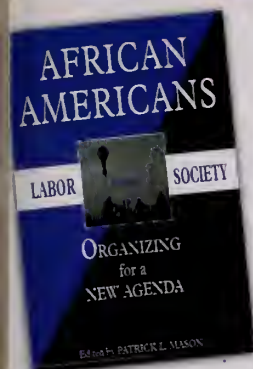
"Estimates are the nation will lose another \$2.2 trillion in household wealth, which means people will have a harder time financing big-ticket items like retirement, homes, financial emergencies and college educations."

The Falling Wealth of American Households
(Includes financial instruments and cash, plus current and future retirement plan benefits, minus financial liabilities.)



Source: Flow of Funds Accounts, U.S. Federal Reserve

PUBLICATIONS



African Americans, Labor and Society: Organizing for a New Agenda, edited by Patrick L. Mason, analyzes the relationship between unions and African Americans and suggests changes to fight racism and economic exploitation aggressively, thereby

improving the economic well-being and political power of all workers. This collection of essays, written by economists and legal scholars, examines issues of race and arbitration, union effectiveness in raising wages, job factors that produce unequal distribution of income and union efforts to build labor-community alliances. \$29.95 paperback. Wayne State University Press, <http://wsupress.wayne.edu>.

Lost Ground: Welfare Reform, Poverty and Beyond, edited by Randy Albelda and Ann Withorn, with a foreword by Barbara Ehrenreich, critiques the results of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, just as that measure is being considered for reauthorization in Congress and 32 states this year. The 14 contributing authors examine what happened to the 12 million welfare recipients forced to seek work who today are barely hanging on the

bottom rung of the economic ladder. The racist and gender politics that created the law hit a new low, says Ehrenreich, when President George W. Bush proposed spending \$300 million to encourage single-parent welfare recipients to get married "to someone, anyone, as soon as possible." \$18 paperback. South End Press, 800-533-8478 or order online through www.powellsunion.com.

WEBSIGHTINGS

www.politics1.com—Provides information on political parties, federal and state officeholders and key issues. Links include progressive and conservative websites and information on such issues as health care and trade. A calendar provides visitors with a daily list of activities and deadlines for the countdown to Election Day.

www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml—The website of Project Vote Smart provides candidate information and issue positions for candidates at all levels of government. Includes extensive state-by-state listings of such data as ballot measures, voter registration, judicial and executive branches, along with information on campaign finances, special interest groups and voting records. The site also features a voter hotline, a toll-free number where researchers will answer questions: 888-VOTE SMART.

When the Paycheck Stops

An AFL-CIO Survival Guide to Unemployment



laidoffworkers.org—For workers who lost their jobs or fear they might, the AFL-CIO recently launched a one-stop website to help in surviving unemployment, protecting retirement security and understanding what went wrong. The site also provides an opportunity to have fun with online games, such as Smash Corporate Greed!

www.workingforamerica.org—The AFL-CIO's Working for America Institute's online "Layoff Survival Kit" assists union leaders and workforce development professionals in responding to the nation's job crisis. The site includes union checklists, employment information and resources, lay-off avoidance strategies and five brochures in English and Spanish. Also includes the institute's latest analysis of the economy.

TRAVEL

Connect with U.S. and Guatemalan activist women, study Spanish and learn how to get involved in the struggle for global economic justice during the STITCH Women's Language School Delegation in Guatemala, Oct. 12–20, 2002. Cost is \$800 and includes housing, meals, language instruction and domestic travel. Scholarships available. Applications are due by Sept. 15, 2002. Contact STITCH, 1525 Newton Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20010. Phone: 202-256-3790. E-mail: stitchdc@earthlink.net. @

MEMORIAL WALL

"American Tragedy, Union Heroes: Union Members Lost to Terrorism," a 40-foot long, 10-foot high tribute to union members who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, is available for union conventions and other events. The memorial wall, first unveiled at the AFL-CIO Convention last December, lists the names of the more than 600 union members who died as a result of terrorism last year, and features photographs of worker-heroes. The wall has traveled to the AFT convention in Las Vegas and was showcased at the Navy Pier on Labor Day by the Chicago Federation of Labor and in Minneapolis at the Postal Workers Convention. For more information, contact Reggie Cole at 202-637-5021 or e-mail rcole@aflcio.org.

BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE



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AFL-CIO

www.laidoffworkers.org

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America's working families are issuing pink slips to CEOs, directors and the politicians who support them when they:

- Destroy jobs and retirement
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Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

OCTOBER 2002

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ALSO INSIDE:

**Getting Out the Vote—
Union Member
by Union Member**

Tough Times Ahead

Speaking Our Mind

Pension Robbers



Speaking
the *Same*
Language

"I RECENTLY HEARD your organization speaking out about corporate fraud....My grandfather was a long-time Teamster. [G]raduating with a management degree, I used to laugh and state that unions are no longer needed because Human Resources and management know better in today's world. I can now say that I was wrong and my grandfather was right. Unions need to have a place in our workforce, more so today than ever...."—Name withheld upon request, sales representative, Massachusetts

SAY WHAT?

How has your union, central labor council or state federation mobilized members to get out the vote?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

about how your union is building for the future through issues-based education and get-out-the-vote actions:

"FIRST, we stick to worker issues....[I]t is important that Local 227's mostly rank-and-file executive board be aware of...the necessity to spend time, money and effort educating members....One of our rank-and-file board members is running for countywide office, another is a state legislator and a former member is now Kentucky's lieutenant governor and candidate for governor....Our stewards, staff and key members are educated about issues...through intensive steward and staff training. We have a young membership. So in addition to the traditional methods of communicating...issues...we use our website and e-newsletters."—Marv Russow, president, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 227, Louisville, Ky.

"I WAS SO PLEASED to see your cover story on young workers [Aug. 2002]....My wife, Rana Platz-Petersen, RN, is the business representative for Local 767, Studio First Aid, IATSE....Rana joined the Retail Clerks at age 14, and I became a member of the Screen Actors 47 years ago when I became one of the original Mouseketeers....[W]e started this remarkable foundation [A Minor Consideration] to improve the conditions facing working kids in the entertainment industry who are, unbelievably, exempt from the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act [of] 1938. Kid actors are not alone in this exemption. Too many of the 5.5 million American children in today's workforce are exempted under FSLA...."—Paul Petersen, national AFTRA chairman, Young Performers Committee, Gardena, Calif.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE that...the union company, Consolidated Freightways, closed its doors nationwide. My father is one of the 15,000 to 17,000 men and women who are now out of a job. What I don't understand is why they shut down on Labor Day, of all days. To me, this is nothing but a slap in the face to both my father and my family....I was on an online post board with my dad, and I saw what all these nonunion men were saying. What just baffles me is that they are saying that they got what they deserved. I bet they would not be saying those things if it was happening to them. They can't comprehend what all these families are going through....I hope to God every one of the suffering people who got laid off nationwide finds a job."—Samantha LeMaster, 14, St. Cloud, Fla.

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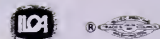
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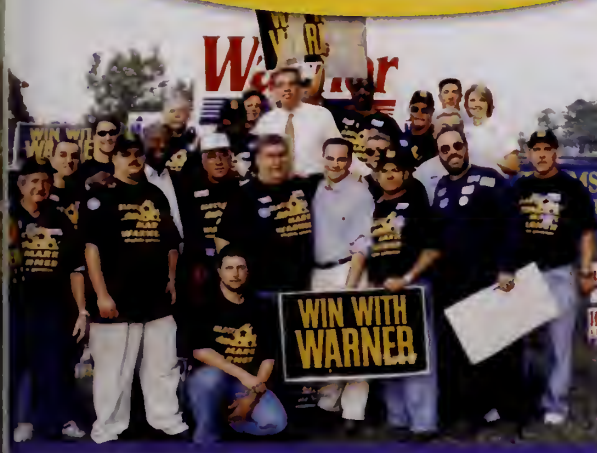
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CONTENTS



4 CURRENTS

26,000 Home Care Workers

Join SEIU

WorldCom Workers Win Back Pay

HERE Settles Historic Contract

20 LIKE IT IS

Room to Grow

21 OUT THERE

Ellis Island Dramatists

Join Actors' Equity

Labor Day? What Labor Day?

22 TOOLBOX

Corporate Zeroes No

Working Heroes

23 HOMEPAGE

Publications: *Workforce Development and the New Unionism*

Harry Van Arsdale Jr.: *Labor's Champion*

The Media: Shaping the Image of a People

Posters: Five posters from AFT that underscore the meaning of freedom, democracy and education for America's schoolchildren

Video: "Who Pays the Price for Corporate Greed?"

Web sightings: Tools and information for the political campaign season and beyond

8

GETTING OUT THE VOTE— UNION MEMBER BY UNION MEMBER

Combining issues education with one-on-one, member-to-member contact, the union movement's grassroots get-out-the-vote efforts are propelling millions of working families to the polls

12

SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

Building and construction trade unions are hiring bilingual organizers, forming alliances with community groups and providing services to Latino workers as part of a long-term strategy to strengthen their own unions—and the entire union movement

15

TOUGH TIMES AHEAD

The Economic Policy Institute's *The State of Working America* report finds tough times ahead for workers—but those in unions will be better able to support their families



SHERRY BUZBY

17

SPEAKING OUR MIND

America's workers worry about the economy, distrust Big Business and show strong support for unions in a new Peter D. Hart Research Associates poll for the AFL-CIO



MARILYN HUMPHRIES

18

PENSION ROBBERS

Criminal corporate actions have drained billions from public employee pension funds—and workers are stepping up their calls for No More Business As Usual

Senior Activists Take Their Message to Congress



Key voters: Senior activists, rallying for affordable prescription drugs, were joined by national union presidents including UFCW President Douglas Dority (far right).

Senior voters will play a deciding role in November elections and a key issue will be a Medicare prescription drug benefit, according to a new survey for the Alliance for Retired Americans.

On average, seniors account for about 28 percent of all voters in off-year elections, the survey shows. To gain the support of this key constituency, candidates must support establishing an affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit, according to a Peter D. Hart Research Associates survey conducted for the Alliance for Retired Americans. Almost nine in 10 (87 percent) respondents say they would be more likely to vote for such candidates.

The Alliance for Retired Americans released the report during its first national conference Sept. 3–5 in Washington, D.C., where nearly 1,000 members marched, rallied, lobbied members of Congress and planned strategies to advance their legislative agenda.

On the last day of the conference, hundreds of seniors carrying signs saying “Drug Companies Make Me Sick” rallied in downtown Washington and marched to the headquarters of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, the industry’s lobbyist, to protest high prescription drug prices. Congressional and union leaders told the crowd they support a true Medicare prescription drug benefit, not the phony benefit preferred by the White House and congressional Republicans.

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org. @

Working Women Vote

In 2002, working women said in an AFL-CIO “Ask a Working Woman” survey that health care, retirement security and other key issues top their legislative and political agenda. And as working women are getting out the vote this fall, they can get the tools they need to mobilize and back the candidates who support their key issues through the AFL-CIO Civil, Human and Women’s Rights Department.

The “Working Women Vote” materials include an election checklist with information on key issues and a poster outlining corporate abuses with the message “We Need Politicians Who Work for Us, Not for Big Business.”

To order “Working Women Vote” materials, call 202-508-6904. @



WorldCom Workers Win Back Pay

On Oct. 1, nearly 9,000 laid-off WorldCom workers—backed by the AFL-CIO—won a ruling that the bankrupt telecommunications giant WorldCom must pay more than \$36 million in owed severance, plus commissions, health care and unpaid vacations the company has owed since letting them go. For many, the ruling by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York means their severance will now be double or triple the \$4,650 at which it previously was capped in court.

“We didn’t do this just for ourselves,” says former WorldCom worker Ben Barile. “We’re fighting for the rights of employees still at WorldCom, and for those at every other company. You just can’t tell if this is going to happen to you.”

The decision reinforces the precedent set by the same court’s August decision regarding an unprecedented \$34 million in additional severance for laid off Enron workers. “The labor movement will continue to fight for fair treatment and stronger laws to protect all workers,”

says Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America.

When WorldCom declared bankruptcy in late July, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney asked WorldCom CEO John Sidgmore to support paying full severance to laid-off workers. When Sidgmore refused, the AFL-CIO joined laid-off WorldCom workers—as it did for Enron workers—in going to court. On Sept. 3, days after Enron workers won their historic agreement, WorldCom filed a motion asking the court for permission to pay its workers full severance.

Using a phone hotline and website set up by the AFL-CIO (see www.aflcio.org), WorldCom workers followed an activism model established by Enron workers. In addition to providing legal assistance during bankruptcy proceedings, the AFL-CIO has endorsed federal legislation by Sens. Jean Carnahan (D-Mo.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) that would increase from \$4,650 to \$13,500—the amount Enron workers won—the bankruptcy court limit on severance payments owed laid-off workers. @

NY Times: Join a Union

Noting that many New Economy workers were left holding worthless stock options after the dot com bubble burst, *The New York Times* in September offered an idea to today’s workers seeking security: Join a union.

Citing AFL-CIO poll results showing 58 percent of young workers age 18 to 34 would join a union, and describing the union movement’s outreach to young workers, the newspaper columnist Abby Ellin approvingly notes that in addition to health insurance and protection against unfair treatment, “A union provides job security, which isn’t a bad idea in this economy.” @

Take Action to Aid Dockworkers

SPOTLIGHT

As America@work goes to press, President George W. Bush was granted a temporary restraining order directing the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to end its lockout of 10,500 dockworkers at 29 West Coast ports and ordering work to resume without a contract. The Taft-Hartley Act was never before invoked in the case of an employer lockout. "This is the first time in the history of the United States that a president has let an employer lock out workers in an extended quest to undermine the workers' union—creating a phony crisis—and then rewarded that employer's action with government intervention," says AFL-CIO Secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka. "It is a tragedy with historic ramifications."

Locked out of their jobs on Sept. 29 by the PMA, the dockworkers fought repeatedly to negotiate, but the union says the PMA never negotiated in good faith because shippers expected the Bush administration to intervene. With threats to bring in the National Guard to operate the docks and other actions, White House support repeatedly has given employers the edge since the contract expired in July.

The temporary restraining order, issued Oct. 8, opens the ports and instructs both sides to return to court Oct. 16, when a federal judge will consider imposing an 80-day "cooling off" period. The Bush administration had asked both parties to agree to a 30-day "cooling off" period. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union agreed, but the PMA, the umbrella organization of West Coast shippers, turned down the request in favor of the harsher Taft-Hartley injunction.

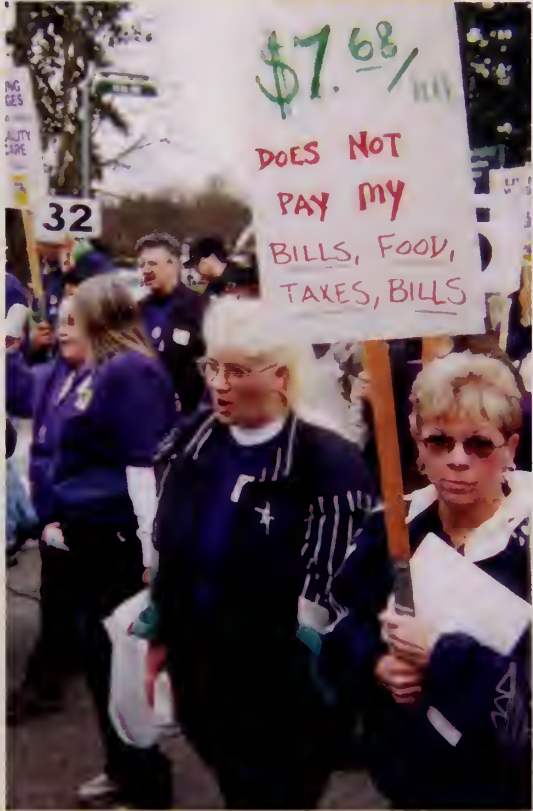
Take part in an e-activism campaign to support the dockworkers and find out what else you can do to help by visiting www.aflcio.org. @

26,000 Home Care Workers Join SEIU

In the state's biggest union organizing victory ever, a strong majority of nearly 26,000 Washington State home care workers won a voice on the job, voting to join SEIU Local 6 in August.

The workers help elderly and disabled clients with bathing, cooking and other household tasks so they can live with dignity in their own homes instead of nursing homes. They want to boost their wages from the current \$7.68 an hour, win health benefits and improve the quality of in-home services.

"Services for seniors and people with disabilities are constantly threatened with budget cuts," says Doris Cole, a home care worker from Spokane. "Now that we're united, the tens of thousands of caregivers in Washington will have a stronger voice to fight to improve the quality of care."



ADAM GLICKMAN/SEIU LOCAL 6

Not enough to survive: Home care workers waged a legislative and organizing campaign to win a voice at work.

Rallying around the theme "invisible no more," the workers built their organizing win on a legislative victory last November, when they convinced 63 percent of the state's voters to pass a measure giving home care workers the right to bargain collectively. Initiative 775 also created a state home care quality authority to serve as the official employer of record for the workers, who are paid with public funds but were unfairly classified as independent contractors and not eligible for basic workplace protections.

This fall, the workers are lobbying for better pay at the state capitol. "We save the state millions by helping people live in their own homes rather than expensive nursing homes," says Brittany Wall, a caregiver from Walla Walla. Of the thousands of home care workers who have formed unions recently, many have won wages between \$9 and \$11 an hour, SEIU leaders say. @

Election Reform Long Overdue

Two years after the 2000 election debacle and only a month away from the 2002 vote, union leaders and civil and human rights activists are protesting the Bush administration and congressional Republican efforts to block meaningful election reform.

"Shame on Congress and shame on the Republicans for blocking election reform," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who chairs the AFL-CIO Executive Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights. "While our government talks of defending freedom around the world, it is denying the most basic freedom—the right to vote and to have that vote counted—to its own citizens."

The AFL-CIO and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of more than 185 national civil rights and human rights organizations, have been working for the past two years to bring about meaningful reform that would include minimum federal standards and protect existing laws such as Voting Rights Act and Motor Voter laws. Although both houses of Congress passed election reform bills, congressional Republicans have kept the legislation bottled up in a conference committee since early spring.

President George W. Bush also put a wrench in the works when he vetoed a supplemental appropriations bill that included \$400 million for election reform.

Snafus in Florida's Sept. 10 primary elections point out the urgent need for election reform. In Miami-Dade County, as many as 68 precincts were closed the morning of the primary and 32 were still closed four hours after the polls opened.

Some voters say their party affiliations were erroneously listed on the rolls, rendering them ineligible to vote in the proper primary. @

HERE SETTLES HISTORIC CONTRACT

For the past 13 years, members of the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 2 stood strong against illegal firings, constant harassment by management and withholding of benefits and raises to win a fair contract at the San Francisco Marriott. Over the years, politicians, union leaders and hundreds of supporters staged protests and were jailed for their efforts.

In September, the workers' solidarity and determination was rewarded when they ratified a four-year agreement with the hotel. The agreement, patterned after HERE contracts at other San Francisco hotels, covers 900 workers and guarantees job security while providing wage increases and expanding eligibility for benefits.

"This contract is a testament to the hard work and tenacity of the members of our union and the many supporters in the commu-

nity who made this achievement possible," says Local 2 President Mike Casey. HERE now represents 90 percent of San Francisco hotel workers, says HERE President John Wilhelm.

The struggle for a contract began in 1989 when Marriott management reneged on a promise to recognize the union if a majority of workers signed authorization cards. After years of bad-faith bargaining by Marriott, Mayor Willie Brown (D) announced in 2000 a boycott of the hotel until a fair contract was negotiated. @

Union Cities Strategies

Leaders from the nation's central labor councils gathered in Washington, D.C., to share strategies that help working families win victories in their communities, including holding corporations accountable, crafting political strategies to advance organizing and ensuring rights for immigrant workers.

Activists at the Sept. 18–20 Union Cities conference also rallied at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in support of workers' efforts to form a union with Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Local 25. Trade Center Management Associates, which employs cafeteria workers at the building, fired a union activist in September

and local and national union leaders have been facing arrest to help her get her job back.

Union Cities leaders also met with representatives of AFL-CIO constituency groups and community organizations, to discuss how broad-based partnerships can link politics with organizing at the community level. With the November elections around the corner, get-out-the-vote efforts are an effective way to build those coalitions, says Michael Allen, vice president of the Nashville and Middle Tennessee AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. "If you have the ability to come together during political campaigns, then you've laid the groundwork that works for organizing as well," he says. @

Workers Pay More, Get Less Health Coverage

As employers pass on the growing costs of medical care to employees, workers are paying more for health coverage with fewer benefits, according to the 2002 *Annual Employer Health Benefits Survey* from the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Education Trust, both nonprofit research organizations. While 56 percent of 2,000 employers of all sizes surveyed between spring 2001 and 2002 say they had increased workers' share of health costs this year, 78 percent say they are likely to increase workers' share next year, according to the report released Sept. 5.

Health insurance premiums rose an average 12.7 percent between 2001 and 2002—the biggest increase since 1990. Single employees now pay approximately \$454 toward premiums, up \$95, while families pay \$2,084, a \$283 increase.

And sounding an alarming note for retirees who often depend on employer-based care to pay for prescription drugs—currently not a Medicare benefit—9 percent of large firms (200 or more workers) eliminated retiree health benefits for new hires or existing workers in the past two years.

The full survey report is available at www.kff.org or by calling 800-656-4533. @

California Working Families Win Big

Advocates for working families in California succeeded in enacting a paid family leave law, while Farm Workers won passage of legislation that ensures workers who vote for a voice at work also will get a contract. At the same time, members of court interpreters' associations, affiliated with Communications Workers of America, won a victory when Davis signed a bill giving them the freedom to form unions. They had unfairly been misclassified as independent contractors.

The state's new family leave law expands the state disability insurance program to provide up to six weeks of partially paid leave to care for a seriously ill family member or new child. The bill will be fully funded through contributions from employees, and workers will receive up to 55 percent of their wages while on family leave. The victory paves the way for passage of similar laws in the 27 other states considering such legislation.

"We hope our actions add momentum to the efforts of working families in other states," says Art Pulaski, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, which was a driving force behind the measure's passage.

In another landmark win, Davis signed legislation that gives farm workers the right to get a mediator who can impose a binding contract if there no agreement is reached within a specified time from the union's initial bargaining request. The legislation is key: In nearly 60 percent of the cases in which the union has won an election since 1975, management never agrees to a contract.

"The historic legislation will allow many farm workers to organize and bargain with their employers," says Arturo Rodriguez, president of the Farm Workers, whose members and allies marched 165 miles from California's Central Valley to Sacramento and held a vigil in support of the bill. @



Victory: Marriott workers won a contract after a hard-fought, multiyear campaign.

Saluting Working Heroes

Under the banner of “No More Business As Usual,” union activists around the country celebrated Labor Day by honoring working heroes and demanding new corporate accountability rules that put workers first.



Honoring workers: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson celebrated Labor Day with working families in the Quad Cities.

In New York City, more than 5,000 union members and their families marked Labor Day with a special Sept. 3 tribute to the everyday working heroes who died in the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks and those who bravely and tirelessly made up an army of rescue and recovery workers.

The Battery Park ceremony was one of hundreds of Labor Day tributes to the nation's working heroes—people who do their jobs and keep the country running smoothly and safely. The events also highlighted attacks on workers' collective bargaining rights, wages,

health care and retirement security from “greedy employers and unbelievable corporate scandals,” AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told a Labor Day crowd of more than 5,000 at Chicago's Navy Pier.

Also over the Labor Day weekend, the union and religious communities joined together in hundreds of Labor in the Pulpits services to celebrate their shared commitment to social justice. Many union Labor Day events focused on the fall elections and the importance of turning out the working family vote in congressional, state and local elections (see story page 8). @

PROFESSIONAL UNIONS REACH OUT TO STUDENTS

Career-focused college students spend their time on campus developing the skills and making the contacts they'll need to be successful, but few consider how unions can help them excel at their jobs. The AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees (DPE) is reaching out to these students, highlighting how having a voice on the job can improve their careers. The programs are a result of a DPE task force on promoting unions for professionals led by Ed McElroy, the department's board chairman and AFT secretary-treasurer.

The Writers Guild of America, The Newspaper Guild/Communication Workers of

America and Television and Radio Artists co-sponsored a series of speakers on communications at Eastern Illinois University, a program the unions are expanding to other campuses.

DPE leaders are developing similar outreach efforts for future engineers at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee with the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

“Most people preparing to enter a profession have little or no understanding of unions,” says Paul Almeida, DPE president. Campus outreach “sets out to pave the way for future organizing by informing students of the vital role unions play in our society.” @

OUT FRONT

Something is very seriously wrong with America's politics.

Unemployment, poverty, lack of health care coverage, personal bankruptcies and home mortgage foreclosures are up. Incomes are down. People who lost their jobs after Sept. 11 now have exhausted their *extended* unemployment benefits.

So how is our president responding to dire need as he travels ceaselessly to raise millions for anti-worker congressional candidates? By questioning the patriotism and commitment to homeland security of Senate Democrats—because they are determined to preserve workers' basic rights in the creation of a new Homeland Security Department.

Working families have lost hundreds of billions of dollars from their retirement plans because of corporate fraud and employers' shift to defined-contribution plans like 401(k)s from more secure defined-benefit pensions. So how is the leadership of the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives responding? By passing a sham, regressive “pension reform” bill that allows CEOs to cut even more workers out of company retirement plans and permits mutual funds, banks and insurance companies to give advice on their own products to workers whose 401(k) accounts they manage.

The stock market's decline has demonstrated to older and younger Americans that shifting Social Security money into private Wall Street accounts would endanger their futures. So how have the presidential administration and congressional backers responded? By agreeing not to use the word “privatization” because it is unpopular with voters—even while they fully intend to be part of the attack on America's most successful family support program.

America has lost almost 1 million manufacturing jobs in the past year alone—jobs that for generations formed the bridge to middle-class life. So how are the administration and congressional allies responding? With silence.

I cannot comprehend the callousness that has given politicians of any stripe the license to disrespect workers—working families, America's voters—as they do now. But we must show them how great a mistake they are making.

Inform your members about where candidates stand on key working family issues with our worksite leaflets. Get them to the polls. Work the shop floor, the mail, the phones—work everything you have. We must draw a line in the sand right now to make clear that working families are politicians' constituencies.

We are the workers. We are America. We *will* be heard
Nov. 5. @

Take Back Politics—Now



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

Getting Out the Vote

BY MIKE HALL

Union Member by Union Member

In 1992, votes from union households accounted for 19 percent of the 104.5 million ballots cast. Since then, union members and their families have been getting out the vote in increasing numbers. By 2000, working family voters made up 26 percent of the electorate—a whopping 7.5 million new union household voters.

By combining issues education with one-on-one, member-to-member contact, the union movement's grassroots get-out-the-vote efforts launched in Labor '96 have propelled millions of working families to the polls.

"You have to do a lot more than send out letters and put up posters asking people to get involved. We are

establishing a very intensive person-to-person connection," says Shar Knutson, president of the St. Paul (Minn.) Trades and Labor Assembly (see page 11).

At stake this November are 34 U.S. Senate seats, the entire House of Representatives, 36 governors' offices, most state legislatures and hundreds of other key state and local offices. The candidates who win will determine the future of Social Security, prescription drug costs, workplace safety and many other important working family issues.

Getting out the union household vote will make the difference. Here's a look at how the union movement is building to win and to last.

PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES

One-on-one with members

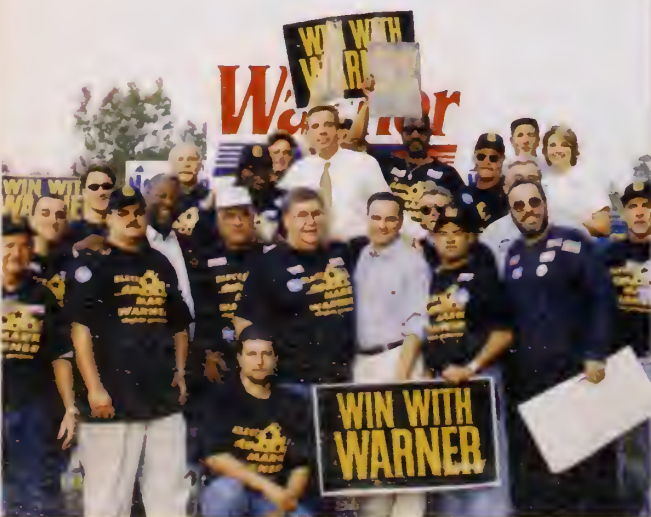
In each of the 19 local unions that make up Painters and Allied Trades New York District Council 19, union members—not just officers or business agents—are meeting directly with other union members, taking the message that politics, politicians and elections have a concrete, everyday impact on the lives of working families.

At the end of their work shifts, union members, armed with lists of union brothers and sisters, stop at two or three houses

on their way home, says Jack Kittle, political director for Council 19. "We've found out that the people they're house-calling respond better to someone with paint on their hands."

From the union's initial efforts in Labor '96 though this fall's important off-year elections, Painters and Allied Trades activists have built a mobilization model that turns out thousands of the union's 140,000 members in get-out-the-vote efforts such as door-knocking, phone banks and worksite contacts. Today, almost every district council and local union has a political committee that keeps members up-to-date on issues and recruits and mobilizes workers at election time.

"In 2000, we built a database from our sign-in sheets at every rally, phone bank,



Mobilizing: Painters and Allied Trades President Jim Williams (center) and union members successfully got out the vote in 2001 to elect Mark Warner (center, top) governor of Virginia.

STEEL WORKERS

Revving up the Rapid Response network

In 1996, the Steelworkers launched a Rapid Response network through which the union reached out to locals across the country with faxed issue briefs and candidate comparisons. The initial goal, says Tim Waters, USWA Rapid Response national coordinator, was to build a corps of activists who would serve as the backbone of the union's legislative and political mobilization strategy to educate and motivate members.

In its first phase, the Rapid Response network reached about one-third of USWA locals equipped with fax machines. Today, all USWA local unions are plugged in to the Rapid Response system—including a growing number via e-mail—and more than 20,000 union members are part of the team that ensures workers on every shift stay informed.

The year-round operation highlights issues such as Fast Track trade authority, foreign steel dumping, retiree health care and the fight for a union voice at work. Union members are urged to make their voices heard by contacting politicians and other decision-makers through e-mails, phone calls, faxes and letters.

The Rapid Response team carries the

focus on issues through the election season get-out-the-vote effort.

"We stick with the issues," says Waters. "We put out candidate comparisons on Steelworkers' issues and ask people to take a look at them, encourage them to register to vote and to vote."

The year-round Rapid Response system helps workers buy in to politics, says Stanley Folce, safety and health chairman for USWA Local 5702, at Kaiser Aluminum's Gramercy, La., plant.

"You bring the issues to the shop floor and then your members contact their senators or representatives," says Folce, who heads a 34-member Rapid Response team. "When members get a response,

they say, 'Hey, maybe they do listen.' It's self-motivating because they see getting involved does pay off—and when election time comes, they know where the lawmaker stood on the important issues."

Even in an off-year election like 2002, the 60,000 Steelworkers in 200 local unions that make up USWA District 1 in Ohio "are paying attention and getting pumped," says Donnie Blatt, the district's Rapid Response coordinator.

"Thanks to the work of local union presidents and political coordinators, so many of our members made the telephone calls and sent the e-mails. Now they know it's accountability time—and their votes are the way to do it."



Issues action:
By focusing on the issues, the Steelworkers Rapid Response network gets out the vote among union members.

lit drop and precinct walk and found out that about 17,500 members performed some kind of voluntary election action—most of them more than once," says Sean McGarvey, Painters and Allied Trades vice president and political director.

In two major 2001 gubernatorial races, some 5,000 Painters and Allied Trades members in Virginia and 6,200 in New Jersey volunteered to ensure working family-friendly governors won in both states.

Laying the foundation for member mobilization sets the stage for the next steps, says McGarvey: Registering union members, co-workers, family and friends—and, most important, making sure they get out the door and vote.

LOUIS SABO

LETTER CARRIERS

Getting out the vote by mail

"Election Day is our longest day of the year," says John Beaumont, president of the California Letter Carriers. Because of the volume of last-minute election material that must be delivered, letter carriers face longer than usual working hours—making it harder for them to get to the polls.

"When you're just so beat after you get home, sometimes even with the best of intentions, it's hard to get back out the door and go vote," says Beaumont. "Or if you don't get off work until 15 minutes before the polls close, you might pass. We thought we'd nip that problem in the bud."

That's why NALC get-out-the-vote efforts focus on encouraging members to vote by mail, with local union leaders and political directors getting mail ballot forms to members and emphasizing the importance of voting.

According to a report by the Center for Voting and Democracy, "Every statistic shows that voting by mail is more convenient and that it increases turnout." The

study notes that along with Oregon's all-mail voting, California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota and Washington State allow mail voting in some form, and other states are expected to launch mail voting—giving working family activists another get-out-the-vote tool.

Voting by mail means more union members cast ballots and also makes GOTV mobilization efforts more efficient. Because the state keeps updated records of residents who have cast mail ballots, unions can match that information with their phonebank and housecall lists and concentrate on members who have not voted.

NALC has much experience in getting members to the polls: At the 2001 AFL-CIO Convention, the union won the Membership Mobilization Achievement Award for the highest voter registration—75 percent—of any union.

"In modern campaigns, with all of the focus on money and mass media, the bottom line still is determined by who gets out the most votes," says NALC Executive Vice President William Young. "While we've



LETTER CARRIERS

In the mail: California Letter Carriers President John Beaumont (right) mobilizes union members to get out the vote to help elect working family candidates such as Dennis Cardoza (D).

never been able to compete with Big Business when it comes to funds, we beat them with our message and our most valuable resources—our members." @

SEIU

Calling All Union Members

Beginning in Labor '96, one-to-one worker contact has been a proven strategy for the union movement's get-out-the-vote success. For SEIU, member-to-member outreach this year has meant talking to most of its 1.3 million members.

Working out of the SEIU Communications Center in New York City, union volunteers "started calling members in May and finished up in the middle of August," says Gaye Williams, SEIU assistant to the president for communications and technology.

Volunteers followed up by sending voter registration cards with a postage-paid return envelope to union

members who said they or their family members were not registered to vote.

The phone drive also enabled SEIU members to join the union's activist base. Callers asked members if they wanted to receive e-mails on getting involved in campaigns to support issues that affect workers' jobs, unions and wages. Some 32,000 members who were contacted said they would be willing to make phone calls and lobby their lawmakers on important working family issues if asked by the union.

In addition, the three-month telethon helped SEIU update telephone numbers and home



SEIU

On call: SEIU volunteers contacted all 1.3 million union members in a get-out-the-vote campaign.

and e-mail addresses. SEIU mailed updated information to each of the union's nearly

300 locals to help their political and organizing mobilization efforts. @

State Federation and Central Labor Councils

Get Out the Vote

South Florida

Fred Frost, president of the South Florida AFL-CIO in Miami, describes himself as a “veteran chad counter.” He spent many hours in 2000 re-counting disputed presidential ballots in Dade County and “saw so many people disenfranchised” in a presidential election ultimately decided by the U.S. Supreme Court rather than the voters.

“After those elections, our unions came together like never before because we want to make sure working families are never disenfranchised like that again,” he says.

As part of the labor council’s initiative to get out the vote among the 100,000 members of the 87 local union affiliates, Frost has asked for politically active locals to form teams of activists to visit each local and “show how they can use the AFL-CIO 10-point political plan to mobilize their members this fall and beyond.”

The 10-point plan sets out key steps for effective political action, from recruiting worksite and local union coordinators to increasing voter registration and linking politics to organizing. “This works best when you physically go there, look them in the eye and say, ‘This is how it’s done,’ ” Frost says.

The labor council is combining activist education teams with an updated website, the labor council’s first automated phone-dialing system, mailings to all union members, regular fax communications and meetings with local unions. Through these efforts, says Frost, “people will be convinced that People Power means something and does work.”

St. Paul, Minn.

Months before election season officially kicked off on Labor Day, the St. Paul (Minn.) Trades and Labor Assembly was setting the groundwork for its efforts in one of the nation’s key states needed to maintain a working family advantage in the U.S. Senate.

The Labor Assembly and politically active local unions joined in a drive to ensure each of the 100 affiliates was con-

GOTV: Minnesota union activists laid the groundwork for GOTV efforts months before the official launch of election season on Labor Day.

ST. PAUL (MINN.) UNION ADVOCATE



tacted and urged to join the Labor 2002 mobilization. “We started out with voter registration, moved into candidate information and now we’re getting our GOTV rolling,” says Labor Assembly Political Director Bree Halverson.

The nearly 39,000 Labor Assembly union members and their families likely will make a difference in one of the most important Senate races: Former St. Paul mayor Norm Coleman (R), whose tenure was marked by his opposition to working family issues, is challenging Sen. Paul Wellstone (D), who has a 100 percent AFL-CIO working family voting record.

St. Paul’s Labor 2002 mobilization is expected to have an impact beyond the Senate race, building to last, says St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly President Shar Knutson. “When we looked at our plans, we didn’t look just at today’s election but at future organizing potential and elections down the road and getting union members elected.”

Oregon

In Oregon, where all residents vote by mail and there are no Election Day polling places, working family voters must get the vote out of the house and into a mailbox or to county-run drop-off points.

In the two-and-a-half weeks before Election Day, union activists get a county-by-county update of people who have turned in their ballots and either check them off phone lists or call and

remind them to get their ballots in the mail or drop them off.

Equipped with 20 automatic phone dialers—“the volunteers love them, you just click the mouse and the call’s dialed,” says Oregon AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Lanning—volunteers made nearly a quarter of a million phone bank contacts in 2000. Combined with door-to-door leafleting, such intensive get-out-the-vote efforts culminated in an 86.3 percent union household voter turnout in 2000.

The state federation’s building-to-last strategies already have resulted in the first 2002 victory for Oregon working families: A paycheck deception ballot initiative sponsored by long-time union foe Bill Sizemore failed to qualify because of phony and forged signatures discovered by a coalition of unions. The Voter Education Project, launched by the state federation and unions, monitored the petition signature-gathering efforts by Sizemore—the money man behind several failed paycheck deception efforts—and Sizemore’s organization was ordered by a jury to pay nearly \$1 million for forging signatures on the anti-union petitions.

The coalition also helped put two working family initiatives on the November ballot: to reform the initiative process and raise the minimum wage.

As a result of the work of unions and their members, says Oregon AFL-CIO President Tim Nesbitt, “This is the year we took back the ballot for Oregon’s working families.” @

Speaking the *Same* Language

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI



Working it: With community support, roofers are winning a voice at work across Arizona.

Building and construction trades unions are hiring bilingual organizers, forming alliances with community groups and providing services to Latino workers as part of a long-term strategy to help workers as well as strengthen their own unions—and the entire union movement

Suburban housing developments in Tucson, Ariz., built by the mammoth, nationwide builder Pulte Homes, bear alluring names that evoke sounds of the desert Southwest, such as “Canción de la Luna,” or song of the moon. But the roofers who help build those homes are not singing any soothing melodies. The Roofers are employed by Metric Roofing, a Pulte contractor. These workers—most recent Latino immigrants—have been trying to win a voice on the job in the face of brutal harassment.

Like many of his co-workers, Felizardo Enriquez says he’s experienced many injustices on the job. Workers often are not given access to water despite the scorching Arizona summers. Metric Roofing workers don’t get overtime, sick pay or affordable health insurance. Metric pays the workers based on the size of the roofs onto which they load

tile. Many times the company says the roofs are smaller than they actually are, which means workers are paid less.

“They are stealing money from us,” says Enriquez.

Thousands of other Latinos throughout the construction industry across the United States face the same harsh treatment as Enriquez—and are turning to unions to win respect on the job. Since 1980, the proportion of Latinos in the construction workforce has more than doubled, to more than 15 percent in 2001, according to the U.S. Census and Current Population Survey. Nationally, one in eight U.S. residents is Latino, according to the U.S. Census.

Building and construction trades unions such as the United Union of Roofers and Waterproofers, Iron Workers and Laborers are revamping their organizing programs to reach out to this growing workforce. Unions

are hiring bilingual organizers, forming alliances with community groups and providing services to Latinos even before they become union members as part of a long-term strategy to strengthen their own unions—and the entire union movement.

As they launch the campaigns, union activists battle hostile employers who exploit the unique vulnerabilities of immigrant workers, some of whom may be undocumented. In most organizing campaigns, U.S. workers from all industries and regions face threats, harassment and intimidation. But undocumented workers endure the additional fear of being deported. The AFL-CIO Executive Council has called for an overhaul of U.S. immigration laws, including legalization of undocumented immigrants and full workplace rights for all workers regardless of their immigration status.

When union strength declines, employers know they can exploit immigrant workers with low wages and unsafe conditions—which drives down wages and standards for all workers. “We look out and see the workforce and it is Latino,” says Iron Workers President Joe Hunt. “The future of Latinos and the future of our unions depend on each other.”

Roofers reach out to the community

In the past two years, workers and the Roofers have convinced three major Arizona residential roofing firms to sign union con-



Partners: Iron Workers President Joe Hunt joins with workers and community members in launching a union partnership with CASA Maryland.

tracts. As a result, more than 400 workers have better wages, health insurance, pension coverage and safety standards on the job—and about 18 percent of the industry in Arizona is unionized compared with zero two years ago. The union’s efforts involve two key strategies: reaching out to community allies and augmenting organizing among the workers with a campaign to educate home buyers and publicity-conscious developers.

Workers attend meetings of community groups and discuss their difficult working conditions. “The involvement of community

groups helps developers see the workers’ struggle as a moral issue,” says John Martini, the union’s executive vice president. Earlier this year, the Valley Interfaith Project held a news conference to support several workers who were fired for striking after they weren’t paid for all the hours they worked. As a result, the contractor rehired the workers. A Tucson city council member, human rights activists, clergy and leaders of other unions also have stood with the roofers at news conferences and other actions. “The community’s work makes it hard for Metric to hide how they treat workers,” says Frederico Gonzales, a Metric roofer the union says was fired for his union activism.

Getting involved with community organizations builds bridges to the workforce, many union leaders say. It’s also key for construction unions to forge alliances with community groups to boost the union’s credibility and trust among workers, says Dave Johnson, director of the Laborers Eastern Organizing Fund.

Meanwhile, Metric roofers also have met directly with Pulte executive officers and board members, as well as other housing developers, to air their issues. They have filed a class-action lawsuit against Metric alleging the company and its subsidiaries failed to pay workers for the work they performed. These types of actions are crucial in all construction industry organizing—but with a difference here: Immigrant workers are the public face of the campaign, endur-



Justice: Milwaukee asbestos removal workers march for a voice at work with the Laborers during the union movement’s Voice@Work month in June.

JACK ORTON/THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

the heightened risk for speaking out for justice. Yet it's a risk the workers, with the union's support, are willing to take, says roofer Enriquez.

"We're not sure when we're going to win, but are not going to stop until we do."

Laborers recruit, train and hire bilingual organizers

To help workers win a voice on the job, the Laborers are training members with VOICE, Volunteer Organizers In Construction Empowerment. The union's member education and mobilization training program—offered in English, Spanish and Polish—helps union leaders identify and recruit potential organizers from their own ranks. Leaders throughout the building trades say the union's own members are the richest source of potential organizers because they understand the industries and see firsthand the importance of growing their union.

"We go to jobsites and talk to workers" in the quest to find bilingual organizers, says Steve Cagle, an organizer with the Laborers' Great Lakes Regional Organizing Committee, which is helping asbestos removal workers in Milwaukee win a voice at work. Since the union's campaign began about a year ago among the 1,200 asbestos workers in the state, the industry has become 20 percent unionized—up from 5 percent. For workers in this dangerous field, that means better safety standards and wages almost three times higher than they earned.

"When immigrant workers stand up for fair pay or safe jobsites, employers suddenly want

to check their legal documents—the same documents employers overlooked with a wink and a nod when they hired them at substandard wages in unsafe working conditions," says Laborers General President Terence M. O'Sullivan.

Union leaders say recruiting bilingual organizers is not easy, so they need to cast a wide net. In addition to signing up members of their own locals, union activists look for Spanish-speaking organizers from their union's other locals in more heavily Latino parts of the country, such as New York and Southern California. AFL-CIO training programs such as Union Summer and the Organizing Institute, as well as classes offered by the George Meany Center, are fertile sources of potential organizers, as are allied community and neighborhood groups. Union leaders say would-be organizers' multilingual skills and thirst for justice are more important than their organizing experience. They can learn crucial organizing skills, such as making house calls, holding one-on-one meetings at training programs.

Iron Workers provide immigration services

On a sweltering August day in Silver Spring, Md., just outside Washington, D.C., leaders of the Iron Workers union packed into a community center meeting room cooled only by a store-bought plastic fan. But the spirits of those gathered were not dampened: Union leaders and community activists from CASA Maryland were there to announce a partnership between

the two groups. The Iron Workers will provide funding to CASA Maryland, a local social service and advocacy agency for immigrants, for an immigration attorney who will help answer immigration-related questions of union members and eventually potential members. Attorney Flavia Jimenez will work with union organizers to file immigration petitions and represent workers in immigration hearings. She also will work with other local activists for pro-worker legislation.

"Companies often evade rules and regulations. Now immigrant workers know that the union stands behind them," Jimenez says. "The best way to improve life conditions is to be a member of a union," adds Gustavo Torres, CASA executive director. "Unions are the best way to change the conditions of Latinos."

For that message to spread to immigrant workers, unions must play a role in providing the services those workers need—even before they become members, union leaders say. Such assistance can include helping workers cash paychecks at union-friendly banks without paying exorbitant fees, as the Roofers in Arizona do for workers who don't have bank accounts.

Haroldo Calderon, who recently joined Iron Workers Local 5, fled Guatemala five years ago to escape poverty and political violence. "I'm so happy to be in the union," he says, citing the better health and retirement benefits, improved safety and the "good rights" he has as a union member. He says the partnership between the Iron Workers and CASA "will help everybody." @

Reaching Out to Latino Workers



Job security: Iron Workers member Haroldo Calderon says union membership has given him "good rights."

Union leaders have built successful outreach on the following action steps:

- Recruit, train and hire bilingual organizers who can communicate with workers. Don't overlook promising potential organizers who speak only Spanish. Community groups, the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute and other union training programs also are places to look for bilingual organizers.
- Translate key materials—such as authorization cards, newsletters and fliers.
- Form partnerships with groups immigrants trust, such as community and religious groups. Creating alliances with them boosts the union's credibility among the workers.
- Publicize the AFL-CIO's position on immigrant workers' rights among community groups, religious congregations, student activists and elected officials. Potential allies need to hear about the union movement's commitment to improving the lives of immigrant workers. Download the "Nation of Immigrants" resolution approved by the AFL-CIO constitutional convention in December 2001 at www.aflcio.org.
- Reach out to Spanish-language media—newspapers, radio and television.
- Provide immigration-related services for the workers—not just the promise of such services—even if they aren't union members yet. This will help workers see that unions are putting resources into working with them.
- Become involved in local political efforts, such as living wage campaigns, that are of special importance to immigrant workers.



DAVID LEE WAITE

Tough Times Ahead

EPI's *The State of Working America* report finds tough times ahead for workers—but those in unions will be better able to support their families

After 28 years of service, the Boeing Co. laid off Machinists Local 751 member Jim Smith in May. Since 1999, the aircraft maker has cut 47 percent of all Machinists nationwide, shipping positions and facilities abroad, plus contracting-out domestically.

Since Smith's termination, almost all the jobs the 56-year-old Seattle resident has found pay less than half the \$28 an hour he made working at Boeing. Fortunately, Smith is set financially—his children are grown and, thanks to his union, he has sufficient severance pay and a guaranteed pension. So when friends encouraged him to apply for a Boeing job building the new F-22 fighter plane, he decided not to.

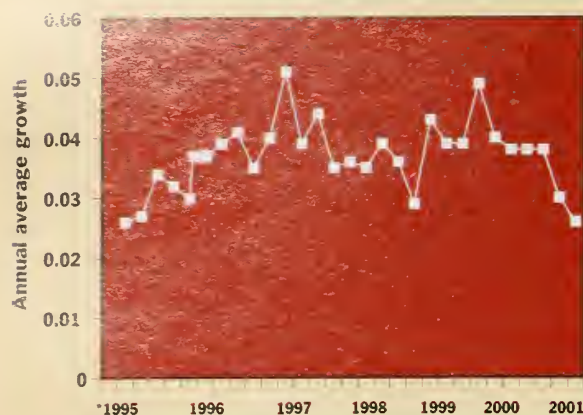
"I figured I'd let one of those 46-year-old kids with a wife and small children take it," Smith explained. "I know good work is very hard to find these days."

Smith's story is one of millions behind the findings of *The State of Working America, 2002–2003*, the biennial Economic Policy Institute (EPI) report released Sept. 1. While headlines have been tracking stock market gyrations, the EPI study focuses on pocketbook economics that matter most for working families—good jobs, wages and benefits—and finds that to restore good jobs for American workers, the federal government needs to invest in the nation's infrastructure and share revenue with states. The low unemployment rate in the late 1990s brought workers their first persistent, broad-based prosperity in decades, according to EPI. "But with the boom gone bust, American workers are heading back to an economy marred by slow wage growth and job loss, with wage and income disparities widening again," says EPI president and economist Lawrence Mishel, who co-authored the study with EPI economists Jared Bernstein and Heather Boushey.

The report finds that workers with a voice on the job fare better. The average union worker makes 11.5 percent more hourly than a nonunion worker in a comparable job, is 53.9 percent more likely to have a retirement plan and 28.2 percent more likely to have health insurance and gets three more days of annual paid vacation. (The EPI's 11.5 percent wage differential is lower than the 25 percent differential reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for all union jobs versus nonunion

Average hourly earnings by quarter,* 1995-2002

Annualized quarterly growth rates of hourly wages for production, non-supervisory workers



*First quarter, not adjusted for inflation.

Source: *The State of Working America, 2002-2003*

jobs because the EPI number has been adjusted for worker and job characteristics, Mishel explains.)

And workers need all the help they can get in today's difficult economy. According to most economists, the recession began in March 2001 after two consecutive quarters of a shrinking Gross Domestic Product (the GDP is the total value of U.S. goods and services). Following two consecutive quarters of growing GDP in late 2001 and early 2002, many economists, especially those on Wall Street, declared a recovery under way.

Yet working families are finding fewer jobs available. By July 2002, unemployment was 5.9 percent, up from a low of 3.9 percent in October 2000. And according to the BLS, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, more workers exhausted their 26 weeks of federal unemployment insurance this July than at the same time last year—a whopping 183.3 percent more in Massachusetts, for example.

Working women, whose employment grew by 3.8 percent between 1989 and 2000, have been particularly hard hit in this recession and jobless recovery, losing jobs in the struggling retail and transportation sectors after Sept. 11, says the EPI's Boushey. "And they are less likely to qualify for unemployment benefits because of low earnings."

Jobs now pay less

Laid-off workers who do find new jobs

likely will earn less, according to a BLS survey in January. The survey found that of 9.9 million Americans who had lost a job in the previous three years, only 64.4 percent were employed again, earning a new median weekly wage of \$571, down from \$609.

Increased unemployment threatens the historic gains workers made in the late 1990s—notably the closing of the income gap between low- and middle-income earners.

"With low unemployment, workers were positioned to be choosy about jobs, to not only push up wages, but get benefits," says Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). "When jobs are scarce, more workers are inclined to take what the boss gives them."

According to the EPI study, the purchasing power of wages—the paychecks that cover the mortgage or rent and put food on the table—already is sinking.

Until 1995, the inflation-adjusted wages of most workers fell steadily for 16 years, with workers lacking college degrees—currently nearly three-quarters of the labor force—experiencing the greatest declines. But wages finally began growing during the late 1990s expansion, an economically favorable time for low-wage workers and their families, says Mishel: "They got jobs, and their wages grew the fastest—11 percent between 1995 and 2000."

But the increase in unemployment has led to a significant slowing of wages, the study finds. In the second quarter of 2002, for instance, the not-adjusted-for-inflation hourly wages of nonsupervisory workers rose at an annualized rate of only 2.6 percent. "You've got to go back to the first quarter of 1995 to find a growth rate that slow," Bernstein says. "If wages continue to slow, as I think they will, and inflation picks up, many workers will be facing stagnation or losses by the end of the year."

Health care costs eating into paychecks

These calculations don't include a new expense that is eating into more and more workers' paychecks—health care coverage increases passed on from employers in the form of premium contributions, co-payments and deductibles. Insurance companies raised premium prices between 10 percent and 15 percent this year, and they'll go up another 15 percent to 20 percent next year, according to industry estimates.

"At a low 4 percent unemployment, workers can insist employers pick up all the pre-

mium hikes," Baker says. But employers are likelier to refuse when the unemployment rate is higher. "If employers pass on half of, say, an \$800 premium increase next year, that new \$400 bill will feel like a pay cut for most workers."

Union workers pay less toward their health care, according to the study. Their deductibles, for example, average \$200 a year, compared with \$300 typically paid by nonunion workers.

Affordable health insurance is the key reason Robert Padilla, a meatcutter for Wal-Mart's Sam's Club in Las Vegas, is urging his co-workers to choose a voice at work with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 771. The income of Padilla, who makes \$15 an hour, and his wife Tracy, a part-time day care teacher, isn't sufficient for the family to afford Sam's Club's \$301 monthly health insurance premium and \$350-per-person deductible. The couple's two children receive coverage through Nevada's health program for kids in low-income families, but Padilla and his wife have none.

"I was a meatcutter with UFCW Local 99-R in Flagstaff, Ariz., for five years, so I know we could get affordable health insurance with union representation," Padilla says. "My co-workers respond and agree with me, but most are too afraid to do anything."

When unemployment is high, workers worried about finding new jobs are more reluctant to confront their current employers, says Mishel. And according to the report, under present conditions, the unemployment rate probably will continue to rise this year and next.

To ensure the economy grows fast enough to bring down unemployment now, the Bush administration must do much more than put on shows like August's "economic summit" in Waco, Texas. "The federal government should immediately give fiscal relief to states now cutting back programs and raising taxes and invest in the nation's infrastructure, its schools and transportation system," says Mishel. "And it can help make the dollar less expensive compared to other currencies. That would decrease the prices of our goods sold abroad, stimulating U.S. manufacturing exports and saving and generating good jobs." @

The State of Working America, 2002-2003 is available for \$24.95 in January. Visit www.epinet.org or call EPI at 202-331-5510; outside Washington, D.C., call 800-EPI-4844.

Economic Woes, Distrust of Big Business—and Strong Support for Unions

With fewer good-paying jobs available, health care costs skyrocketing and retirement security weakening, workers are expressing a dramatic drop in confidence in corporations. At the same time, according to a recent AFL-CIO survey, workers' support for unions has surged in the wake of corporate scandals such as those at Enron Corp., WorldCom and Arthur Andersen, which cost employees their jobs, pensions, savings and benefits while CEOs walked away with millions of dollars.

The survey of 900 adults conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the AFL-CIO shows significant changes in public opinion over the past year. Only 38 percent of those polled say they are satisfied with the economy today, down from 63 percent last year. And job security is dropping. Today, by a 2-to-1 margin, the public says it's less secure than in January 2001.

For the first time since 1984, when the AFL-CIO began tracking workers' attitudes toward union representation, more nonunion workers say they would vote "yes" than "no" in a representation election in their workplace.

Half (50 percent) say they would support a union, compared with 43 percent who say they would not, with support for unions strongest among younger workers, blue-collar workers and people of color. In a similar poll for the AFL-CIO last year, 42 percent said they would vote "yes" and 51 percent said they would vote "no."

Strong support for collective bargaining

Workers also overwhelmingly disagree with President George W. Bush's plan to eliminate collective bargaining rights in the proposed federal Department of Homeland Security, with 74 percent saying these employees

should have the same union rights as other federal employees.

At the same time, it's no surprise scandals have caused public confidence in Big Business to drop significantly, says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. Some 39 percent of respondents say they view corporations negatively—the highest negative rating for corporations in the nine years of Hart surveys for the federation—and 30 percent positively. This is the reverse of last year when 42 percent viewed corporations positively, compared with 25 percent viewing them negatively.

Corporate reform—the goal of the union movement's "No More Business As Usual" campaign—is a high priority among

America's workers, the survey revealed.

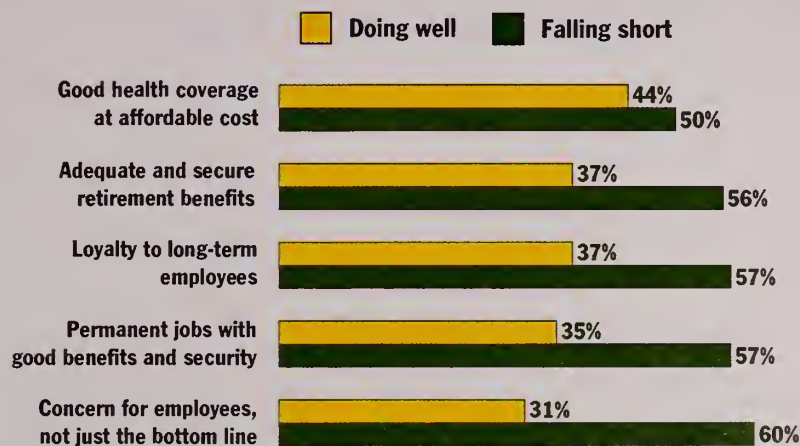
By a two-to-one margin, respondents say government is too concerned with the interests of Big Business and wealthy special interests. A large majority (71 percent) say they would be more likely to vote for a political candidate who took the position that employees should be protected in employer bankruptcy and have the same protections as CEOs (69 percent).

Says Tim Leahy, secretary-treasurer of the Chicago Federation of Labor: "Our mission right now is to educate and energize our members to vote this November and help elect candidates who will enact corporate reform that really works." @

—James B. Parks

Low Grades For Employers

How are employers doing on these aspects of working?



When people rate employers on more specific qualities, the verdict is consistently negative. A majority feel employers are falling short in areas such as showing concern for employees and not just the bottom line (60 percent), being loyal to long-term employees (57 percent) and providing adequate and secure retirement benefits (56 percent). The most significant change emerges in the area of providing permanent jobs that offer benefits and job security—57 percent say employers are falling short, up from 46 percent in 1999.

PENSION ROBBERS

Criminal corporate actions have drained billions from public employee pension funds—and workers are stepping up their calls for **No More Business As Usual**

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) pension plan, the nation's fourth largest state pension plan for public workers, lost approximately \$130 million when Enron stock became worthless. And when WorldCom tanked, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) and California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS), the nation's largest and second largest such public pensions, lost a combined \$830 million.

"The FBI estimates that bank robbers stole approximately \$208 million between 1996 and 2001," says California State Treasurer Philip Angelides, who serves on the CalPERS and CalSTRS boards. "In the blink of an eye, our workers' funds lost more than four times that much to corporate thieves."

Since January 2001, the nation's collectively bargained public pension funds, covering more than 5 million state, county and municipal workers, have lost approximately \$240 billion, or 15 percent, of their value, estimates AFSCME director of pension investment policy Rich Ferlauto. And according to a recent Wilshire Associates consulting firm survey of 93 state public pension funds, 51 percent had more liabilities than assets, up from only 31 percent in 2000.

Public pensions are designed to cope with the ebb and flow of business cycles. Even the decline in the stock market following the burst of the high-tech bubble in early 2001 wasn't out of the ordinary. But the Enron fiasco and other revelations of widespread corporate corruption that have sent investors fleeing and stocks dropping went far beyond normal stock market gyrations.

"AFSCME members nationwide lost \$1.5 billion in public pension money because of the Enron scandal alone," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. "While American working families are struggling to make ends meet, the top executives of the 25 largest U.S. companies to go bankrupt walked away with a combined total of \$3.3 billion. These greedy corporate executives who led their companies into the ground are rewarded, while their hard-working employees are laid off, and hundreds of thousands more lost their retirement savings. And, unfortunately, all of us have lost faith in that old belief, 'If you work hard and play by the rules, you'll come out on top.'"

"Corporate greed and corruption has caused union members, like other Americans across the country, to lose faith in Wall Street and corporate America."

No More Business As Usual

To restore investor confidence, which encourages investment and ultimately protects workers' pension fund assets, activists are keeping up the fight for corporate governance reform.

Passage of the accounting industry reform bill in July by Congress was "only round one in a 12-round fight," says Ron Richardson, Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees executive vice president and secretary of the Council of Institutional Investors. "If the Republicans had not blocked corporate reform for years and years, none of this would have happened. Now they're pretending to get on the bandwagon for reform when, in fact, they try to weaken any regulatory legislation put in front of them."

As part of its "No More Business As Usual" campaign, the AFL-CIO and affiliate unions are demanding more reforms, including corporations counting stock options as expenses and giving workers and their pension funds real power to choose corporate directors who are genuinely independent of CEOs.

In some states, administrators' dicey decisions have exacerbated public pensions' market-related asset drops. For example, such plans usually hold stock through index funds, low-fee investment funds that spread risk by investing in the entire stock market, rather than just one company. In Florida, the pension board's three trustees, which included the president's brother, Gov. Jeb Bush (R), allowed the Alliance Capital money management firm to pick individual stocks. Alliance bought Enron shares right

up to the company's bankruptcy, causing the public employee pension system to lose nearly three times more on Enron than any other public pension, according to AFSCME's Ferlauto.

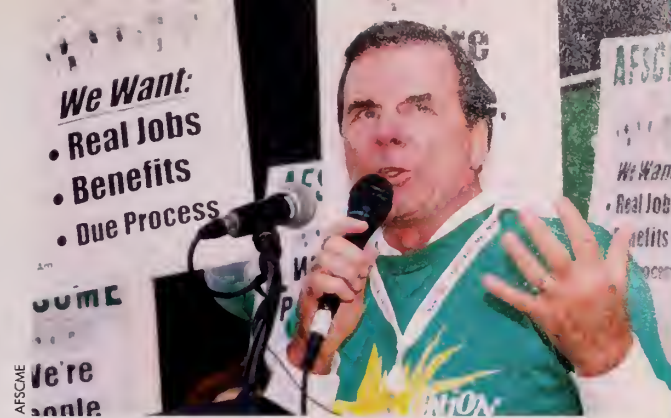
At the time, Alliance executive and board member Frank Savage also was an Enron director; he since has resigned from the failed energy company.

Keeping the guarantee in public pension plans

Shortfalls in public pensions highlight the value of defined-benefit versus defined-contribution programs. "Today, most public pensions are defined-benefit, meaning retirees are assured a fixed amount, no matter what happens on Wall Street," says Steve Abrecht, director of SEIU's Capital Stewardship program. "If public employees had been in defined-contribution plans, their economic futures, like those of workers with 401(k)s, could evaporate with stocks."

Although it would seem the unlikeliest time for public pensions to convert to riskier defined-contribution plans, that's exactly what's being pushed in some states. "It's a rush to the bottom," says Mary Botkin, political director for AFSCME Council 75 in Oregon, where government employers have lobbied to convert Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)—which has lost between 3 and 5 percent of its value, about \$100 million, in the past year—into a defined-contribution plan for new employees.

"PERS lost \$87 million on Enron alone, and several million thanks to WorldCom,"



"Corporate greed and corruption have caused union members, like other Americans across the country, to lose faith in Wall Street and corporate America."

—AFSCME President Gerald McEntee (above)

Botkin says. "Corporate thieves stole our retirement money and now employers, who claim defined-contribution will save taxpayers money, want to make PERS depend on the thing that's damaged it the most—Wall Street and its corruption."

There's a similar low road lure in picking investments for the plans. In August, union activists and elected leaders shamed Connecticut-based toolmaker Stanley Works into abandoning a proposal to reincorporate in the tax haven of Bermuda, a move management said would save shareholders \$30 million annually in taxes. Still, shortfalls are making many pension administrators reluctant to halt such short-sighted schemes.

It's more important than ever to take the high road, says California's Angelides, who has proposed CalPERS and CalSTRS drop stocks of companies that dodge taxes by reincorporating abroad. "This is the most critical time to step forward and say high road practices, whether in corporate governance, treatment of workers or social responsibility, are fundamentally important because only they are capable of ensuring economic progress and shareholder value," he says.

"Companies that pay outrageous amounts to CEOs, manipulate the stock market like Enron or exploit workers are the same kind of companies that will stick it to shareholders." @

For information on the AFL-CIO "No More Business As Usual" campaign, visit www.aflcio.org.

Union Voters Mobilize to Save Public Pensions

THE FIGHT to prevent conversion of Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) from a defined-benefit to defined-contribution plan for new hires is the single issue uniting all public employees in Oregon, whether they're members of AFT, the Laborers, Electrical Workers, Fire Fighters, SEIU or AFSCME," says AFSCME Council 75 Political Director Mary Botkin. "Ninety-nine percent of public employees are in PERS, and it's the one unifying message that brings everybody together: 'They're after your PERS.'"

It's an extremely potent message because government employers are breaking their deal with the workers. "Everybody who works for the government in Oregon, whether a social worker, police officer or firefighter, works because of PERS," Botkin explains. "They went in knowing they're making less, but will get a decent retirement."

With elections approaching, asking legislative candidates where they stand on PERS is a bottom-line question for Oregon activists. "We ask them if they're willing to support the current PERS plan, if they're willing to fight any reduction in it and if they're willing to work with us to find long-term funding solutions," says Botkin. "If the answer is 'no,' they're out of there."

AFSCME publicizes the issue through newsletters, press releases, worksite fliers, worksite meetings and brown-bag informational lunches. "Frankly, we don't have to spend much time on the issue," she says. "Our members get it right away." And the issue is also a great organizing tool for new members," she adds. "We let workers know we're fighting to protect everybody's interest in a secure retirement." @

LIKE IT IS

Room to Grow

Despite Sept. 11-related job loss, service-sector jobs are booming in the hotel industry—and the union movement is reaching out to ensure these low-wage workers win a voice at work

As a result of new casino construction, hotel employment in Mississippi more than tripled during the 1990s, creating nearly 28,000 new jobs. But according to an AFL-CIO Working for America Institute hotel industry report released in late August, job growth is meaningful only when coupled with decent wages, benefits and career growth for hotel workers who, compared with other U.S. workers, tend to be younger, less educated and more likely to be women, immigrants and people of color.

In Mississippi, hotel workers made an average of \$20,000 in 2000, a whopping 40 percent less than the average \$28,000 paid to Nevada hotel workers, according to the report *U.S. Hotels and Their Workers: Room for Improvement*. Nevada was the only state to add more hospitality jobs—88,350—than Mississippi during the 1990s.

And the key reason for the wage difference, the report finds, is union membership: Hotel workers represented by unions earned a median hourly wage of \$10 in 2000, compared with the \$8.50 per hour median wage for nonunion workers. Approximately 30 percent of all Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees work in Nevada, while the union is working to gain a foothold in The Magnolia State's hotels.

Says HERE President John Wilhelm, "The study—the first in Working for America's series of industry-specific reports—shows unions make a huge difference, turning those dead-end jobs into potential careers with higher benefits, company-paid health coverage and pensions."

In 2000, 1.8 million Americans worked in hotels, 48.1 percent more than in 1984. Since the mid-1980s, hotel jobs grew faster than overall U.S. employment, reflecting the hospitality industry's expansion in the late 1980s and 1990s, the report finds.

All that changed with the recession and Sept. 11. Some 128,000 hotel jobs—6.7 percent of all jobs—were lost from March 2001 through May 2002, with 69,000 of



Union difference: HERE President John Wilhelm says the new study shows unions give a big boost to low-wage workers.

those since Sept. 11. Hotel employment rose by 6,000 jobs between December 2001 and January 2002, and after remaining stable through March 2002, again declined, more than wiping out the small gain. Unemployment among hotel workers grew from 5.2 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2001, a 1.8 percent increase larger than the .8 percent increase for all workers.

Jobs skyrocket in the service sector

Throughout the 1990s, hotel employment was one of several bright spots in the economy's service sector. In recent years, the manufacturing sector has been devastated, losing more than 600,000 jobs between 1990 and 2000, plus another 1.3 million in 2001, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The BLS projects the economy will add only 577,000 manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2010.

But in the service sector, more than 12 million nongovernment service jobs were created between 1990 and 2000, including about 260,000 in hotels. And the BLS projects another 12.9 million new service jobs between 2000 and 2010, including 2.8 million in health, 597,000 in amusement and recreation and 255,000 more in hotels.

Too many service workers face dead-end jobs paying poverty wages. The report finds that, except in Las Vegas, "the average annual hotel wage in the top 20 hotel metropolitan areas was too low to enable a one-parent, one-child family to afford the basic necessities of life in 1999." In 2000, 47 percent of hotel workers, but only 27 percent of all U.S. workers, earned less than the \$8.40 hourly wage that a full-time, full-year worker needed to reach that year's \$17,463 federal poverty line for a family of four.

But with more organizing, greater numbers of union members and recent contract victories in major travel destinations such as Hawaii, San Francisco and Chicago, HERE is changing that picture.

Ensuring workers are paid a living wage

Activists can help level the playing field for workers who want union representation by forging agreements with local governments using taxpayer dollars to finance new hotel construction in central city redevelopment projects. They also reach out to workers through neutrality card-check agreements, which give new workers a freer choice about unionizing after they're hired.

Protected by union representation, hotel workers are positioned to advance. They can negotiate industry-union training opportunities such as HERE Local 54's chef apprenticeship program with Atlantic City casino hotels or Las Vegas' Culinary Training Academy—a nonprofit organization that trains, places and helps workers move ahead—created by Culinary Workers Union Local 226/HERE and casino hotels.

"These programs are good for workers," says Wilhelm, and because they cut down employer turnover, "they're good for the hotels, too." @

—Jane Birnbaum

A copy of the report is available on the website at www.workingforamerica.org or call 202-974-8100.

Ellis Island Dramatists Join Actors' Equity

On historic Ellis Island, the port of entry for millions of immigrants to the United States, a group of actors who portray a search for justice and a better life decided they could use a little justice themselves—and voted to join Actors Equity in August.

Six times a day, the actors perform “Embracing Freedom—The Immigrant Journey in America,” a play that begins with a mother telling her teenage daughter about their family coming to this country in the early 1900s, while actors portray the ordeals the family faced in making its way to Ellis Island.

“The actors are a tight-knit group,” says Roberta Loew,

nicknamed “The Norma Rae of Ellis Island” for her role as one of the leaders in the effort to seek a voice at work. “We love performing the show, but we certainly don’t love the working conditions.”

With no health insurance, no pension and no respect—one manager told them, “You’re not real actors,” says Loew—the 10 actors employed by the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation also endured conditions so overcrowded the site became a fire hazard. “They were furious when the fire marshals came last year,” Loew recalls.

Now as they bargain their first contract, the Ellis Island actors aren’t just playing “Embracing Freedom,” they’re living it. @

A Moooving Demonstration

Workers at the sales catalogue warehouse Brylane, whose campaign for a voice at work has been supported by activists in multi-city events in past months, recently won backing from an unusual source: the Coalition of Concerned Cows (CCC), a chapter of Animals for the Ethical Treatment of People.

In September, the group herded for a rally in front of the new upscale Manhattan store of Gucci designer Stella McCartney. Although McCartney, daughter of Paul, has an enviable record as an animal rights activist—she has received a Humanitarian Award from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)—the cows pointed out the Gucci group is owned by the notorious Paris-based Pinault-

Printemps-Redoute (PPR). PPR has been exposed for sweatshop abuses in Pakistan, India and other countries.

PPR also is the owner of Brylane, where more than one out of every 10 workers suffered an ergonomics-related injury in 2000. When Brylane employees in Indiana tried to form a union, Brylane management launched a vicious anti-union campaign.

Bessie, a CCC spokesanimal, noted: “Stella is so compassionate when it comes to our animal causes, we assume she will be equally compassionate when it comes to fighting sweatshops.”

After the rally, the cows shed their costumes. Turns out, inside were some creative UNITE activists with a sense of humor. @

GE Workers Get Jacked Up

When Jack Welch retired as CEO of General Electric last year, he got a \$10 million annual pension for life and a consulting gig that pays \$86,000 for just five days work. But Don Banninger and his 200 co-workers never got a chance to retire: In August, the entire workforce got pink slips when GE closed the profit-making Philadelphia transformer plant, known locally as the GE plant on Elmwood Avenue.

A \$10 million pension wasn’t all Welch received: a company jet on call 24/7 a swank New York apartment stocked with food and servants; lifetime front-row tickets to Knicks games; prime seats at Red Sox games, Yankees games and the Metropolitan Opera; and a limited edition 2003 Mercedes-Benz SLR.

But when the Securities and Exchange Commission began looking into the legality of the perks in September, Jack decided to spend some of that \$10 million pension to pay for them—to the tune of \$2.5 million a year. That still leaves \$7.5 million for incidentals.

“Jack got a really lucrative deal, and I got the shaft,” says Banninger, 60, a wire and assembly worker. Because of his union contract with IUE-CWA Local 119, Banninger receives a \$580 per month pension and has medical coverage for a year. But GE is seeking to raise the health insurance payments of retirees and current employees.

On Oct. 19, union activists and their allies around the nation will hold a “No More Business as Usual” day of action to call on legislators to reform corporate governance. It’s time to send a message, Banninger says, against greed—and to tell CEOs they can’t jack up workers anymore. @



Poor Jack: Former GE CEO Jack Welch agreed to pay for some retirement benefits after federal investigators started looking into his package.

Labor Day? What Labor Day?







During a Labor Day appearance on “Fox Morning News,” host Steve Doocy threw U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao what should have been a softball, asking the secretary the origins of Labor Day.

Unfortunately, Chao didn’t know. “Well, you might have one on me on that,” replied the secretary of labor. @

CORPORATE ZEROES

No Working Heroes

While working Americans toil at their jobs, "corporate zeroes" have pocketed huge sums of money as they drive their companies into ruin. A list of "corporate zeroes" shows the damage done to workers, investors, communities and the nation.

Company		Lost Jobs	Lost Stock Value	CEO Pay
Enron	Created a maze of off-the-books partnerships to hide debts and losses. CEO claimed no knowledge of accounting improprieties. (<i>The Washington Post</i> , June 20, 2002)	4,500	Lost \$80 billion in market value as the company slid into bankruptcy.	CEO Ken Lay received \$33.5 million in total compensation for 2000.  AFP/NEWS.COM
Global Crossing	Criminal and civil investigations into possible ghost transactions with other telecom companies pending. (<i>Congressional Quarterly</i> , July 5, 2002, p. 1799)	2,000	Lost \$40 billion in market value in a few months. (<i>New York Post</i> , Feb. 3, 2001) Recent price \$0.022	Chairman Gary Winnick received \$3.1 million in total compensation for 2000.
Tyco	Executive charged with tax evasion and evidence tampering. (<i>The Washington Post</i> , June 30, 2002)	1,473 (Tyco laid off nearly 4,500 from businesses purchased in 2001)	Lost \$86 billion in market value from its peak share price over the last year.	CEO Dennis Kozlowski received \$62.4 million in total compensation for 2001.  REUTERS/NEWS.COM
WorldCom	\$3.9 billion in expenses hidden to shore up the company's bottom line. (<i>The Washington Post</i> , June 30, 2002) Additional \$3.3 billion in accounting irregularities. (<i>The New York Times</i> , Aug. 9, 2002)	17,000	The company once worth more than \$100 billion filed for bankruptcy on July 21, 2002. (<i>The New York Times</i> , July 22, 2002)	CEO Bernard Ebbers received \$13.2 million in total compensation for 2001.  REUTERS/NEWS.COM
Merrill Lynch & Company	\$100 million settlement with New York over allegations that the firm's analysts misled investors. (<i>Business Week</i> , July 22, 2002, p. 31)	23,000	Lost \$18.8 billion in market value from its peak share price over the past year.	CEO David Komansky received \$16.1 million in total compensation for 2001.  REUTERS/NEWS.COM
Halliburton	Shareholder suit alleging the issuance of false and misleading statements over its accounting for cost overruns on construction jobs. (<i>Dallas Business Journal</i> , June 6, 2002) (<i>Business Week</i> , July 22, 2002, p. 35.)	Some layoffs anticipated. (<i>Dallas Business Journal</i> , March 19, 2002)	Lost \$7.2 billion in market value from its peak share price over the past year.	CEO David Lesar received \$10.3 million in total compensation for 2001.
Xerox Company	Improperly reported \$6.4 billion in revenue over five years. Employee has filed class action lawsuit alleging the company misled employees about the value of Xerox stock in 401(k) plan. (<i>The Washington Post</i> , June 30, 2002)	13,600	Lost more than \$3 billion in market value from its peak share price over the past year.	CEO Anne Mulcahy received \$12.1 million in total compensation for 2001.  REUTERS/NEWS.COM
Adelphi	\$3 billion in questionable loans and transactions. (<i>The Washington Post</i> , June 20, 2002)	100	Lost almost \$6.5 billion in market value from its peak share price over the past year.	CEO John Rigas received \$2.7 million in total compensation for 2000.
Qwest Communications	Question of whether it inflated revenue for 2000 and 2001 through capacity swaps and equipment sales.* *New management trying to clean house.	11,000	Lost \$32.5 billion in market value from its peak share price over the past year.	Ex-CEO Joseph Nacchio received \$103.9 million in total compensation for 2001 and \$250 million in stock profit.  AFP/NEWS.COM

Sources: Bloomberg.com; yahoo finance.com. Job loss figures from CBS MarketWatch. Market value losses current as of Aug. 27, 2002.

PUBLICATIONS



Workforce Development and the New Unionism, edited by Penn Kemble, with a foreword by Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America, presents 11 essays that detail the challenges and opportunities of work-

ers' education and training needs in today's economy. The essays explain how apprenticeships spearheaded in the past by the Seafarers and other unions have ensured a skilled workforce and how education and training issues give unions an edge in enabling workers to win a voice at work. \$12.50 paperback. New Economy Information Service (NEIS). Call NEIS at 202-347-2348 or e-mail vthomas@newecon.org.



Harry Van Arsdale Jr.: Labor's Champion, by Gene Ruffini, brings to life an icon of New York's 20th century union movement, Harry Van Arsdale, who led Electrical Workers Local 3 for decades and whose influence

stretched well beyond his 30,000-member union. A strong advocate of civil rights and champion of fair wages, Van Arsdale was a nationally and internationally accepted figure equally at home with workers and President John F. Kennedy. Available to union members for the discounted price of \$15.95 hardback through Nov. 30; \$29.95 after that date. Call M.E. Sharpe, 800-541-6563, or visit www.mesharpe.com.

The Media: Shaping the Image of a People, by Bill Overton, includes a compilation of illustrations from *Harper's Weekly* from the 1850s through the post-Emancipation era and photographs from the 20th century. Overton, a member of the Screen Actors, says his goal in creating the book was "to shine a floodlight on those who present you and me to the world via film, TV, video, radio, Internet and the print media." \$45 hardback. ProStar Publications. Available in bookstores.

ELECTION TOOLS

www.aflcio.org/politics—The AFL-CIO's People Powered Politics site provides workers tools and information for the campaign season and beyond. Workers can register to vote, find out which candidates local union movements endorsed for federal or statewide office and learn more about key issues in this year's elections—including education, Social Security, wages and fair trade. Also read congressional voting records, hear from political activists and see how unions' people-powered politics takes on Big Business' big bucks.

www.workingfamilies toolkit.com—A simple six-step process enables activists to design customized political fliers, selecting issues and adding their union's logo. The completed flier will be e-mailed to them as an Adobe Reader PDF file that can be taken to a local printer or printed in bulk and shipped overnight. By clicking on Labor 2002 in the toolbar at the top of the page, visitors can download a timeline for the 10-point plan at the core of the union movement's political program.

www.issues2002.org—Research incumbent candidates by clicking on the appropriate state and on an incumbent's name to find a comprehensive list of the elected official's voting record, sometimes with quotes and newspaper excerpts. A chart lists incumbents' positions on key issues based on their votes.

www.vote-smart.org—Visitors to Project Vote Smart will find information on hundreds of ballot issues and more than 42,000 candidates for public office, some of whom completed detailed issue questionnaires

posted on the site. Extensive state information includes lists of county elections boards and congressional district maps. There's also a "youth inclusion project" aimed at young voters and a research hotline (888-VOTE SMART).



In **"Who Pays the Price for Corporate Greed?"** a brand-new, five-minute video produced by the AFL-CIO, laid-off Enron and WorldCom employees and other workers describe firsthand the high price of corporate greed on their lives and their futures: lost jobs, savings, pensions, health care and more. The action video showcases activists urging working families to vote for candidates who will stand for them, not for corporate special interests.

The video is great tool to show:

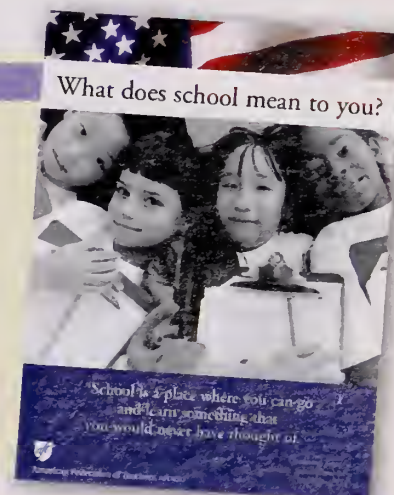
- At town hall meetings and other public meetings through election season.
- Before phone banking and leafleting to enthruse volunteers.
- At union meetings mobilizing members for get-out-the-vote action.

For free video copies, call the AFL-CIO Support Services Department, 202-637-5042; outside Washington, D.C., at 800-442-5645. @



POSTERS

AFT has created a set of five posters that underscore the meaning of freedom, democracy and education for America's schoolchildren by combining the words and pictures of students. The 17-inch by 24-inch posters are available to AFT members for \$3 per set or \$10 for nonmembers. For more information or to download an order form, visit the website www.aft.org/posters or order from AFT Public Affairs—Posters, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-2079.



Tyco International CEO L. Dennis Kozlowski's **\$60 million-a-year salary** wasn't enough.

So Tyco gave him:

- ✓ A **\$16.8 million** Manhattan apartment, plus **\$11 million** in furnishings and **\$3 million** in renovations.
- ✓ A **\$7 million** Park Avenue apartment for his ex-wife.
- ✓ **\$2.1 million** for his current wife's 40th birthday party.
- ✓ **\$15,000** dog umbrella stand.
- ✓ **\$6,000** shower curtain.

Meanwhile,
Tyco investors
lost **\$86 million**,
and thousands
of Tyco workers
lost their jobs.



This November, working family votes will determine
whether the lawmakers who are elected support
Big Business gluttons—or working families.

You can make it happen Nov. 5.

Visit www.workingfamiliestoolkit.com
for candidate comparison materials.

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002

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ALSO INSIDE:
**Meeting Health
Care Costs at the
Bargaining Table**
Senior Strength
**Holiday
Shopping Guide**

"I WAS NEVER much of a union supporter. In fact, I thought most union [members] were self-serving, interested in getting higher wages while performing as little service as possible—much like the corporations that employed them. I recently read an electronic copy of an interview [of President John Sweeney]....I was impressed with [his] responses....I'm afraid that attitudes like mine helped to break union strength during the past several decades. As a result, there is too much power in the hands of corporations, so much power and influence that the voice of

SAY WHAT?

What innovations is your union proposing at the bargaining table to ensure strong health care coverage?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Selected responses will appear in a future issue. America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone: 202-637-5010; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@afcio.org.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

about how your union has mobilized members to get out the vote:

"[We got out the vote through] the Operating Engineers Local 3 Community Action Teams (CATs). With 40,000 members in six states, Local 3 has taken the AFL-CIO Street Heat concept to a new level. CATs...have been hitting the streets, phones, worksites, rallies and meetings to educate our members... regarding the issues and [getting out the vote]....Local 3's CAT program...now boasts more than 1,200 member activists. Contact Cindy Tuttle, IUOE Local 3 director of political training, at 916-286-2790 or 916-801-5950."—Cindy Tuttle, Sacramento, Calif.

Correction:

The photo with the Qwest Communications item in the October 2002 "Corporate Zeroes: No Working Heroes" is not Qwest CEO Joseph Nacchio.

many Americans is not really represented by government. I now believe that strong unions may be essential to restoring democracy to the United States, especially if those unions have a broad vision that goes beyond just placing people in jobs."—Jim Pennino, Stillwater, Minn.

"I WAS BORN and raised in the San Pedro and Long Beach area. The harbor has always been a way of life for me and those around me. My husband has been a casual longshoreman for five years. Due to the lockout by and the resistance of the [Pacific Maritime Association] to sign a contract with the ILWU, we have been waiting for the next full-time hiring period. It's heartbreaking to see all our hopes for the future, our communities' livelihoods, being diminished right before our eyes. My husband and I have felt for some time the PMA has rallied the president and his administration in this dispute...."—Chalena Gonzales, Long Beach, Calif.

"...THE BUSH administration is working hand in hand with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to take away the rights of working people represented by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union....Bush and the PMA are hoping to prevent ILWU workers from winning a fair contract. Beyond that, the PMA wants to bust the union....The PMA locked us out....Using Taft-Hartley, which President Truman described as a slave-labor law, the PMA and Bush administration hope to impose fines that could bankrupt the union....The ILWU just wants to go back to work with a fair contract. That's all we have ever wanted...."—Kevin Gibbons, ILWU Local 10, San Francisco, Calif.

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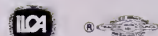
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CONTENTS



AFSCME
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4 CURRENTS

Part-Time Workers, Full-Time Union Members

Wired for Organizing

Campaigning for Justice at Wal-Mart

Union-Made Uniforms:
A Perfect Fit

Cover: Steve Wewerka

ILWU Local 19 member Herald Ugles and fellow ILWU members (from left) Cager Claubaugh (Local 4), Donnie Schewendeman (Local 19) and Tom Jacobsen (Local 27) traveled to Minnesota to get out the working family vote.

8

MEETING HEALTH CARE COSTS AT THE BARGAINING TABLE

Unions are standing strong for affordable health care and proposing innovations at the bargaining table

12

'DETERMINED TO MEET THE CHALLENGE'

In getting out the vote across the nation this election, union members faced stiff competition from unprecedented corporate campaign spending, but are vowing to step up efforts

16

SENIOR STRENGTH

In its first year, the Alliance for Retired Americans signed up 2.7 million members who are mobilizing for affordable prescription medication and a strong Social Security system



20

HOLIDAY SHOPPING GUIDE

An all-in-one resource for union-made products perfect for holiday gift giving



CULINARY WORKERS LOCAL 226/HERE



CLARK JONES

INDIVIDUAL ITEMS ARE BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Partners: AFT President Sandra Feldman joins Nat LaCour, AFT executive vice president, and CCW Deputy Director Marci Young in launching the new partnership.

AFT PARTNERS WITH CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

To expand its capacity to create a unified voice for child care workers, The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW), a nonprofit advocate for the child care workforce, joined with the AFT Educational Foundation on Nov. 1. The nonprofit AFT foundation conducts and sponsors research and study in educational and related fields.

The CCW works to improve the quality of child care services by upgrading wages, benefits, training opportunities and working conditions of child care teachers and family child care providers.

"Together the AFT and CCW will work to develop an even stronger voice for the child care workforce and the children and the families they serve," says AFT President Sandra Feldman. At AFT's 2001 summer conference, Feldman called for universally available, accessible and affordable high-quality preschool education with needy children receiving first priority. @

Dockworker Negotiations Continue

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union resumed negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) Nov. 14 after a tentative agreement on a key issue: the impact of technology on jobs.

On Nov. 1, with bargaining still to come on other major issues, including pensions, an arbitration system and wages, both sides agreed that new port jobs created build on the

employers' cost savings on technology to secure better pension benefits.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka is assisting the ILWU in developing strategy in bargaining with PMA, the organization of West Coast shippers.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Justice announced Nov. 13 it would not seek sanctions against the ILWU despite PMA's charges that the

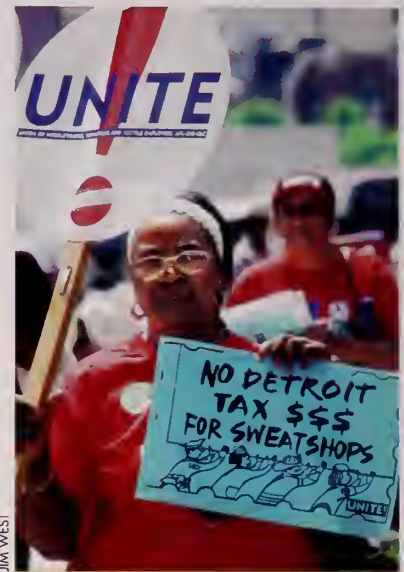
Union-Made Uniforms: A Perfect Fit

Aimed at assuring the nation's approximately 3 million uniformed workers wear union-made clothes on the job, a campaign by AFL-CIO central labor councils, state federations and affiliated national unions scored an outstanding mid-October victory in Denver.

After members of UNITE and the Letter Carriers, joined by Denver Labor Council activists, rallied at uniform supplier Genesis Direct and spoke with managers to protest the company's sale of nonunion uniforms to U.S. Postal Service employees nationwide, the owner called UNITE within half an hour.

"He made clear he wanted to be on the list of recommended distributors selling union-made uniforms," says UNITE uniforms coordinator Dan Hennefeld.

The Denver victory gives considerable momentum to the three-year effort. In Detroit, the city council is reviewing its decision that awarded a police uniform contract to a bidder who planned to fulfill the order in Colombia, where workers' rights routinely are violated. The decision followed a June protest at the contractor, a Detroit-area uniform store,



JIM WEST

Fitting protest: UNITE members and supporters rally in Detroit.

whose owners then told UNITE it will sell union-made products whenever possible.

Previous victories include New Jersey Gov. James McGreevey's (D) executive order guaranteeing all apparel and uniforms bought by the state not be made under sweatshop conditions; a decision by Greyhound Lines Inc. giving its more than 5,000 drivers, Amalgamated Transit Union members, union-made uniforms; and a new joint UNITE-Fire Fighters label in union-made firefighters' uniforms. @



CHRIS FARINA

Assisting: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka is taking part at the negotiating table.



ocracy@work: Wal-Mart workers and their supporters in Las Vegas rally for the freedom to join a union.

Campaigning for Justice

Thousands of activists sent a message to Wal-Mart on a National Day of Action Nov. 21. Through grassroots actions at Wal-Mart stores across the country, the People's Campaign—Justice@Wal-Mart, a coalition of unions, community and environmental groups and consumers, called on the company to respect the workers, consumers, suppliers and communities that have made the company the largest employer, the largest retailer and the largest U.S. corporation.

Wal-Mart has fiercely fought employee efforts to win a union voice at work. As a result, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has issued more than 40 complaints against the company in 25 states in recent years for labor law violations. To deny its employees information about forming a union,

Wal-Mart obtained two unprecedented nationwide injunctions against the United Food and Commercial Workers to keep its representatives out of the stores.

Most recently, an NLRB administrative law judge in September found the company guilty of violating federal labor laws in its campaign to deny workers a voice on the job at 14 Las Vegas-area stores. The judge ordered the giant retailer to stop preventing workers from distributing union materials, interrogating workers about their union views and threatening employees with loss of benefits. He also ordered Wal-Mart to reverse disciplinary action against two pro-union workers.

To find out more and to see a report on Nov. 21 events around the country, visit www.walmartdayofaction.com. @

Living Wages in New York, Chicago

Union activists and their allies succeeded in their efforts to win a living-wage ordinance in New York City and boost Chicago's living wage. The New York City Council on Nov. 7 passed an ordinance requiring agencies with city contracts providing day care, home care and help for people with cerebral palsy to pay workers \$9.60 an hour without health insurance or \$8.10 an hour with health insurance. The increases will boost wages for 50,000 workers.

The new law represents "a lift for the local communities and businesses where the money will be spent," says New York City Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin.

The same week, at the urging of SEIU Local 880 and other unions, the Chicago City Council voted to increase the city's living wage rate of \$7.60 an hour to \$9.05 an hour and index it to inflation. @

SPOTLIGHT

Part-Time Workers, Full-Time Union Members

Full-time workers at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., where the entertainment theme park increasingly was hiring nonunion, part-time workers, recognized the best way to preserve jobs was to help their new co-workers gain a voice and benefits. After a five-month campaign, the nearly 6,000 part-time workers became union members in September, joining about 25,000 full-time Disney World employees, an increase of more than 20 percent in union membership.

The part-time employees, who work on average 16–24 hours a week in nearly every aspect of the park's operations, seek to increase their wages from the current \$6.89 an hour. They also want job security and a voice in how they are treated. "We don't want to be second-class citizens," says Vicky Vanegas, a part-time hostess at Disney World. "We want more input into our wages and health insurance."

"More and more full-time jobs are going to part timers," says Ed Chambers, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1625, one of the six unions that make up the Service Trades Council (STC), which represents the Disney workers. "Our goal is to turn that around and create full-time jobs and to give first choice of the new jobs to the part-time workers."

STC kicked off the organizing drive in April, with Disney union members and local union staff reaching out to the part-time workers. The key to the part-time workers' victory was a neutrality agreement with a card-check between Disney and the STC, negotiated as part of the master agreement in 2001, says Chambers, who coordinated the campaign for the STC.

Contract negotiations for a first master contract for the part-time workers began in October.

Other unions in the STC include Teamsters Local 385, Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees locals 362 and 737, Theatrical Stage Employees Local 631 and Transportation•Communications Union Local 1908. @



Signing up: Liza Ramirez (right), a UFCW Local 1625 shop steward, signs up a part-time Walt Disney World employee.

No More Business As Usual

In 100 cities coast to coast, union activists turned out for "No More Business As Usual" national days of action Oct. 14–20 and urged the election of candidates who take stands against corporate greed and for working families.

In Baltimore, AFL-CIO President John J.

Sweeney, Maryland union leaders, former WorldCom workers and hundreds of working

family activists walked a precinct and called on Congress to pass corporate accountability reforms that protect jobs, retirement and health care benefits. "Corporate lobbyists have made sure that Washington won't pass laws to keep insiders from getting rich at our expense," says laid-off WorldCom worker Cara Alcantar.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson led a rally and precinct walk in San Antonio and UNITE President Bruce Raynor joined activists in Portland, Maine, to demand fair trade policies and end sweatshops policies. Sheet Metal Workers President Michael Sullivan led a precinct walk in Las Vegas.

And at the Anniston Army Depot in Anniston, Ala., AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka rallied with hundreds of working families, including public employees, who lost \$48 million in retirement savings as a result of Enron's collapse.

Gwen Horne, a UNITE Local 1021-C member and textile worker at Anniston Sportswear Inc., turned out at the depot. "It's the first rally I've ever been to," she says. "I went because we need to elect legislators who will work to preserve jobs like mine." @



Pension drain: San Antonio activists turned out to protest corporate greed and get out the vote in support of working family issues.

Postal Workers Honored

The Brentwood mail processing center in Washington, D.C., has been renamed to honor two Postal Workers who died after being exposed to anthrax there last year. Joseph Curseen Jr., 47, a 15-year post office employee, and Thomas Morris Jr., 55, a 28-year veteran, died of respiratory ailments in October 2001 after they were exposed to anthrax-laced letters bound for Capitol Hill. One of the letters was later opened in the office of Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle (D-S.D.) on Oct. 15, causing the Hart Senate Office Building to be shut down for nearly three months.

Cleanup at the Curseen-Morris mail processing center began in August, and officials still are unsure of when it will reopen. Rep. Albert Wynn (D-Md.) introduced the legislation in the House changing the name of the facility. It passed both houses of Congress unanimously, and President George W. Bush signed the bill in September. @



Joseph Curseen Jr.



Thomas Morris Jr.

COURTESY CURSEEN AND MORRIS FAMILIES

United Airlines Engineers, Technicians Join IFPTE

In a major victory for white-collar and professional employees, nearly 500 engineers and technicians at United Airlines maintenance facilities nationwide voted overwhelmingly to join the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

The engineers and technicians were seeking a seat at the table as United tries to recover from the loss of business after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the impact of the economic recession. The company has threatened to cut the engineers' and technicians' jobs, pay and benefits to stave off bankruptcy. Without representation, the employees would have been at high risk for losing their jobs without any recourse, the union says.

"This vote shows that in these uncertain economic times and in an industry that faces an uncertain future, white-collar workers understand that they need a voice on the job. And the union is the best way to provide that voice," says IFPTE President Gregory Junemann.

Should layoffs occur, United's unionized employees have the right to return to their jobs when normal business resumes. "Our first order of business is to immediately demand bargaining over the effects of any layoffs in the engineering area," says Julia Adkins-Clark, IFPTE's general counsel. "This victory could not have been more timely."

The vote, which was counted Oct. 28, was the first-ever telephone ballot conducted by the National Mediation Board. The board mailed ballots with a special phone number, password and personal identification number (PIN) to each eligible member. When the member called in and entered the password and PIN, he or she received instructions on how to record the vote. @

Wired for Organizing

At Atlanta-based Internet service provider BellSouth.net, 350 customer service representatives are now among the nation's first organized Internet employees after a successful card-check on Oct. 10. Under card-check, the employer agrees to recognize the union when a majority of workers sign authorization cards choosing union representation.

The mostly young, African American women workers reached out to 7,000-member Communications Workers of America Local 3204. "They wanted a union, and nothing was going to stop them," says Local 3204 organizer Sheila Williams. "It had nothing to do with salary—they just

wanted a voice, somebody and somewhere to lodge their grievances and complaints in order to gain respect on the job."

Parent company BellSouth Corp., which currently employs 65,000 CWA members nationwide and has a contract with the union that includes provisions to reduce barriers when workers decide they want a union, encouraged the workers to vote against representation. Recalls Williams: "These young people stood up the first day and said back, 'Why are you talking down the union? The union isn't saying anything bad about you.'" The members negotiated a tentative contract agreement within days of gaining a voice at work. @

Perseverance Pays Off for Vermont Nurses

Buoyed by a strong show of support from community groups, 1,300 nurses at Fletcher Allen Health Care, Vermont's largest hospital system, voted overwhelmingly for a voice at work through the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, an AFT affiliate.

Despite the employers' virulent anti-union campaigns each time workers tried to form a union, the registered nurses persevered to make their efforts to join a union the largest in Vermont in decades, according to the Vermont Workers' Center, which supported the nurses in their campaign.

The nurses, with the assistance of the Vermont State Labor Council and AFT, reached out to community,

political and religious leaders for support. Their efforts led to a letter of support from Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and a public statement by Gov. Howard Dean (D). Also, on the day of the vote, the workers ran an ad in the state's largest newspaper featuring a petition with more than 1,000 signatures backing the nurses' right to choose a union.

"No longer will administrators who care more about the bottom line have sole decision-making power over issues central to our profession," says RN Tara Risinger.

"We know that when compensation and working conditions improve, we can attract and keep the nurses we need in the profession," says Steve Chamberlin, a 26-year IV RN. "It's better for the patients." @

A Professional Solution

Professional and technical workers make up the fast-growing sector of organized workers today. Now these workers have their own Professional Rights and Opportunities (PRO) Network, launched Oct. 23 by the AFT, The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America and the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees. Aimed at protecting white-collar workers' free expression and professional rights, PRO will release reports, hold forums, coordinate public information campaigns and suggest legislative and regulatory reforms.

Issues will include proposed Federal Communications Commission changes that would allow cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations in the same community, growing use of non-tenured, part-time faculty in colleges and universities and commercial pressures on schools that compromise teaching and inquiry.

The group also will promote model contract language addressing concerns such as employers monitoring workers electronically by counting their computer keystrokes.

Professionals who work in the media and higher education need "a zone of professional independence and expression in order to maintain a free press and a high quality education system," says AFT Vice President William Scheuerman. This zone of free expression has shifted as professional employees feel increasingly threatened by corporate influences in classrooms and newsrooms, technology used to monitor workers and challenges to academic freedom and intellectual property rights, he says.

For more information, visit www.dpe-pro.net. @

OUT FRONT

The union movement's political program has been so powerful in recent years that Republicans appropriated our playbook in 2002. They knew they couldn't beat us just by throwing obscene amounts of money at politics—although they tried once again. They also had to create a well-funded grassroots base to counter the people power of unions.

That's one of the reasons many union-supported candidates were defeated Nov. 5 despite the remarkable efforts of tens of thousands of union volunteers (see page 12).

Another reason is geography. Most of the closest House and Senate races this year were in states and districts, like Texas and North Carolina, that do not have large numbers of union members.

A year ago in this column I urged you to make a New Year's resolution to organize—more, faster and better. And the recent election provides painful evidence that organizing must remain Resolution No. 1 for all of us in the union movement.

This is an extremely dangerous time for working people. Backers of a corporate agenda now control all branches of government. Working families need unions more than ever to balance corporate power on the job and in public policy.

And to influence public policy so it benefits rather than harms working families, we have to grow. To revive America's manufacturing base, to save Social Security from privatization, to ensure working families can get health care and medicine, we have to grow. To prevent the presidential dismantling of collective bargaining we've seen in the airline industry and at West Coast ports, we have to grow. We have to grow to keep workplaces safe and make them fairer, to safeguard pensions from corporate theft and to protect the rights of immigrant workers. To win for working families in 2004, we have to grow.

We know the corporate agenda backed by the White House and the congressional majority will not address the economic pain working families are feeling. More tax cuts for the rich aren't going to help unemployed workers find jobs. Prescription drug legislation funded by the pharmaceutical industry isn't going to resolve seniors' dilemmas about whether to buy food or needed drugs.

And we know our vision for the future, which places working families above corporate greed, is the vision that reflects America's core values.

Now we have to grow to make that vision real.

Please don't go to sleep Dec. 31 until you have recommitted to making organizing the highest priority of our unions in the coming year. I won't. @

Resolution 1: Organize



BY JOHN J. SWEENEY

Meeting Health Care Costs at the Bargaining

BY JANE BIRNBAUM

In the early 1980s, when Kenny Adamson was a busboy at a Las Vegas hotel, he dropped his health coverage because he couldn't afford the \$50 monthly premium. Then his wife became pregnant and a county hospital delivered the baby. Adamson spent the next five years paying back the hospital.

Because of his experience, Adamson, now a Culinary Workers Local 226/Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees member, Caesars Palace cook and 44-year-old father of four, is glad he was not hit with health insurance premium costs after contract negotiations this summer.

"We voted on it, and almost everyone agreed to give up a raise in the first year rather than start paying premiums because we know that once you open that door to premiums, those costs keep going up," he says. "And I know from experience that you never can tell when you are going to need health insurance."

Covered: Kenny Adamson experienced firsthand the effects of a lack of health insurance—and appreciates his union's efforts in negotiating strong health care coverage.

Table



CULINARY WORKERS LOCAL 226/HERE

Today, working families are all too aware of the fragility of health coverage—and also are experiencing firsthand how the high costs of health care coverage negate wage increases. According to a late September federal Census Bureau report, 1.4 million Americans lost their health insurance in 2001 because of layoffs and employers reducing benefits. As a result, the number of uninsured Americans rose to about 41.2 million, up from 38.72 million in 2000, according to the bureau.

Workers who retain their job-based health insurance increasingly are faced with higher policy premium contributions and deductibles for plans with reduced benefits. (Premiums are the overall cost of insurance policies, often paid on a monthly basis, and differ from insurance deductibles, which are the out-of-pocket costs consumers must pay before insurance coverage kicks in.)

Citing skyrocketing prices for medical technology, prescription drugs and hospital stays, insurers hit employers with group policy premium increases averaging 12.7

percent last year, the biggest increase since 1990, according to the 2002 Employer Health Benefits survey by Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust nonprofit research groups.

A recent study commissioned by insurers' BlueCross BlueShield Association identified new technology and hospital industry consolidation as key drivers in rising health care costs (visit www.bcbs.com to read the report, "What's Behind the Rise: A Comprehensive Analysis of Healthcare Costs").

Employers, seeking to pass those costs to workers, are using traditional methods, such as increasing premiums. But some are beginning to heed the advice of benefit consultants touting so-called defined-contribution health plans that, like defined-contribution 401(k) retirement plans, would set working families adrift to bear the risks of the private market individually (see box, page 11).

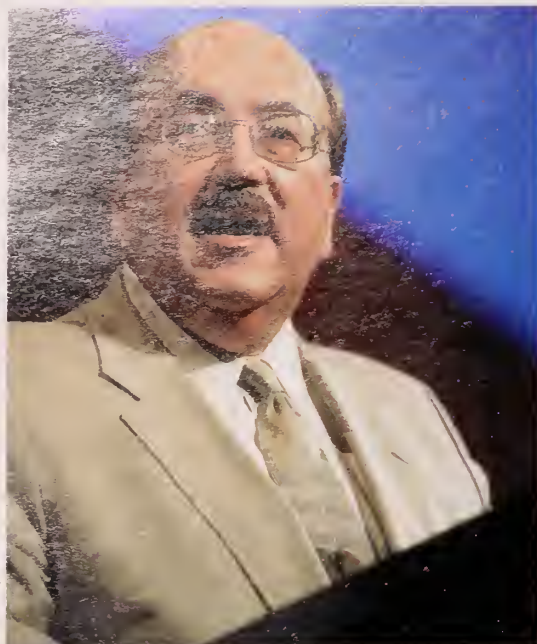
Taking it to the table

Unions are fighting back at the bargaining table, standing strong for affordable health

Health Care Conferences for Union Negotiators

To enable union negotiators to take the lead in fashioning affordable and effective employer-provided health coverage, the AFL-CIO is working with national unions to plan regional health care conferences in 2003. The meetings will focus on techniques to contain health care costs, quality purchasing initiatives that steer members to providers with good medical outcomes and public policy changes that encourage employers to provide health insurance benefits.

For locations and dates, contact Chris Owens at 202-637-5178.



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Quality care: IAM President Thomas Buffenberger says the union's efforts at improving health care quality clearly are paying off for members.

care and proposing innovations to slow health care cost hikes. In Las Vegas, for instance, where casino hotels contribute to a union Taft-Hartley health and welfare fund, Sept. 11, 2001, "turned the health plan upside down," according to Local 226 Secretary-Treasurer D. Taylor. (Taft-Hartley funds are jointly run labor-management plans that provide benefits for groups of

workers with different employers.) With health plan reserves low—because employer contributions are based on hours worked and many workers had been laid off or worked short hours—employers wanted workers to start paying out-of-pocket toward premiums.

"We see workers at nonunion properties paying \$150 to \$170 monthly premiums for inferior plans, so we said 'no' and made that our line in the sand," says Taylor. Including an eight-day strike at the small Golden Gate hotel, HERE negotiations covering approximately 45,000 workers and nearly 40 hotels were settled over several weeks this summer.

"To stabilize our health care plan, members agreed it was worth giving up a wage increase in the first year of a five-year contract," Taylor says. "And with a total \$3.23 hourly wage and benefit increase, it's the best contract we've ever gotten in bad economic times."

According to union health care experts, minimizing monthly premium contributions and deductibles is critical because high employee health care costs encourage workers to drop coverage or not use it even when they have it. "You don't want a pregnant woman with high blood pressure not seeing a doctor because she can't afford a \$500 deductible," says Ruth Antoniadis, who advises several union health and welfare

funds. "Co-payments, like \$5 or \$10 a visit, are preferable to a deductible because, especially with low-income workers, a doctor will often see them even if they can't afford the co-payment."

High deductibles also potentially harm workers' health plans. If workers avoid seeking care until they wind up in the emergency room with a \$50,000 tab, their health plans have to pay that huge bill, which in turn causes premiums to shoot up. "That's the real disaster of high deductibles," says Antoniadis.

According to union health funds consultant and former SEIU District 1199 director of research Geoffrey Gibson, employers are shifting health costs to workers via premium contributions and deductibles because many employers' group premiums now are increasing between 35 and 50 percent over a three-year collective bargaining agreement. That cost, added to a 5 percent annual wage increase, represents a labor cost increase that many employers will resist, says Gibson. But, he adds, "with intelligent analyses of plans and option choices, premium increases over three years can be kept to about 20 percent, with savings available for wage increases."

Focusing on quality

Buying quality—using and paying for those treatments that research has shown to

Retiree Health Coverage **on the Rocks**

Five years ago, when Ron Williamson retired at 56 after nearly 30 years maintaining manufacturing equipment at Lynchburg, Va.-based BWX Technologies Inc. he believed the company always would offer health care. But by 2002 he could no longer afford \$358 monthly premiums for a policy with a \$5,000 annual deductible. With multiple chronic conditions, he was facing doom and gloom.

Williamson was fortunate. Recently, he qualified for Social Security and early Medicare, and the Veterans Health Administration provides his prescription medication. But millions of other retirees, such as Ruth Tubbs of Bristol, Conn., keep struggling.

When Tubbs retired seven years ago,

the corporation that bought the bank where she worked canceled retiree benefits. For a while she used Medicare HMOs that provided heart and diabetes medications. But today, there's only one HMO in her area that accepts Medicare, and it doesn't pay for drugs. Tubbs's 69-year-old husband Leonard was forced to return to work to pay for her medication.

"Just as HMOs left Medicare in my area," says Tubbs, "I guarantee that under the House Republican drug plan, private insurers that sell seniors drug policies will pull out the moment they aren't making enough."

Even as the Bush administration and Republican lawmakers oppose adding a prescription medication benefit to

Medicare—the federal health insurance program for seniors and people with disabilities—employee-based health care is proving a tattered safety net for retirees. According to a recent federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality report, the share of private-sector businesses offering health coverage to retirees younger than 65 dropped to 12 percent in 2000 from 21.6 percent in 1997. For those 65 and older, coverage dropped from 19.5 percent to just 10.7 percent.

The loss of employer-based coverage is particularly hard on those covered by Medicare who must pay for pricey prescriptions drugs. While the House in June passed a weak bill that would provide seniors with little true pre-

Health Care Snake Oil

be effective and investing in prevention and member education—is key to managing today's rising health costs. Educating members in coping with such common ailments as asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure can reap huge savings, according to Gibson, whose study of an asthma management program found that it saved approximately \$2,500 in medical care per asthmatic adult or child.

When employers attempt to pass rising costs to employees instead of seeking relatively painless ways to cut costs, unions must take the lead. That's how 4,400 Machinists Local 5/6 members at Bath Iron Works, who make Navy destroyers in Bath, Maine, helped resolve a two-month strike in 2000 caused in part because the employer demanded members pay roughly \$200 monthly for HMO family premiums, up from approximately \$40 a month.

IAM health experts examined the plan and found that trimming its use could hold down premium hikes. They suggested a prescription price schedule that encourages members to use less expensive generic drugs. In addition to gently increasing co-payments for medical visits, they proposed innovative programs to educate members in using their care wisely and steer them to hospitals with records of success, which minimizes costs because members get well.

Recognizing the value of the union's sug-

“Consumer-driven” are the words employers use when peddling new defined-contribution health insurance plans. Princeton economic professor Uwe Reinhardt, a health care specialist, calls defined-contribution plans “the new snake oil” in health care. Depending on their structure, such plans *can* be benign. But at their worst, they give workers a lump sum to buy coverage in the market, which older workers and those with chronic conditions that require costly care and medication often can't afford.

For example, an employer could hand employees each \$6,000 to pay for all their annual medical expenses, including premiums, deductibles, co-payments and any uncovered medical costs. For one family, that might be more than enough. But a family with a critically ill member

might find itself forced to pay many thousands more than \$6,000 to buy a policy that a private insurer is willing to sell.

“They floated that at Xerox Corp. in the late 1990s,” Reinhardt recalls. “The employees rose up, and the idea was dead on arrival.”

While not yet common, defined-contribution plans have begun appearing on bargaining tables. “We need to be talking about the importance of protecting defined-benefit health plans so people understand what they are being asked to give away,” says Steven Kreisberg, associate director of AFSCME's department of research and collective bargaining services. “And our best defense for them is being ready with cost-savings proposals that don't simply shift costs to our members.”

gestions, the employer agreed to absorb more of the premium hike. Today, a monthly family HMO premium for IAM members at Bath Iron Works is \$50, up \$10 rather than the \$160 the employer first proposed.

“Our efforts at improving health care quality clearly are paying off for our members,” says IAM President Thomas Buffenberger. “Bringing employers along in this fight has been slow going, but worth the effort.”

For more information, visit the websites of these nonprofit research groups:

- *The Center for Studying Health System Change* (www.hschange.org),
- *The Kaiser Family Foundation* (www.kff.org),
- *The Institute for Health Policy Solutions* (www.ihps.org) and the
- *Leapfrog Group for Patient Safety* (www.leapfroggroup.org). @

scription drug coverage and refused to take action on Senate-passed legislation encouraging the sale of cheaper generic medication, Senate Republicans used procedural tactics this year to block a floor vote on a Medicare drug benefit bill.

George Kourpias, president of the non-profit Alliance for Retired Americans, says seniors deserve the right to the financial security of health benefits when they retire: “That means knowing that the health care coverage they worked so hard for will be there when they need it.”

Yet, money set aside for retiree health care is an irresistible sugar pot for many employers, says Princeton economics professor Uwe Reinhardt. “The only protection workers have is unions or the integrity of corporate leaders.”

Longstanding U.S. industries such as

manufacturing and telecommunications are likelier than so-called New Economy sectors to have retirees depending on affordable employer-based health care that provides full coverage until they are eligible for Medicare.

In the U.S. steel industry, for example, 34 companies have declared bankruptcy since 1997, leaving more than 100,000 retirees and their dependents without coverage. (Although legislation to pay the steel industry's retiree health care costs is stalled in Congress, Fast Track trade authority legislation passed in July included a tax credit program to help steel retirees buy health insurance in the private market. Yet its effectiveness is unclear, Steelworkers leaders say.)

Some corporate executives have reneged on retiree health benefits because the Financial Accounting Standards Board

(FASB) requires them to list future retiree health care costs as if they were legal financial liabilities, which they are not, says Michael S. Gordon, an employee benefits lawyer and a co-drafter of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. Yet, “instead of fighting to change the FASB law, companies have decided it's easier to eliminate retiree care,” says Gordon, who believes rewriting the rules would help protect retiree health care.

So would strengthening and expanding Medicare. “Its key problem for retirees is the lack of drug coverage,” says Steve Sleight, Machinists director of strategic resources. “Drug costs are escalating rapidly and causing tremendous financial burdens for everybody. It's essential that unions keep up the fight for a Medicare drug benefit.” @

'Determined to Meet the Challenge'

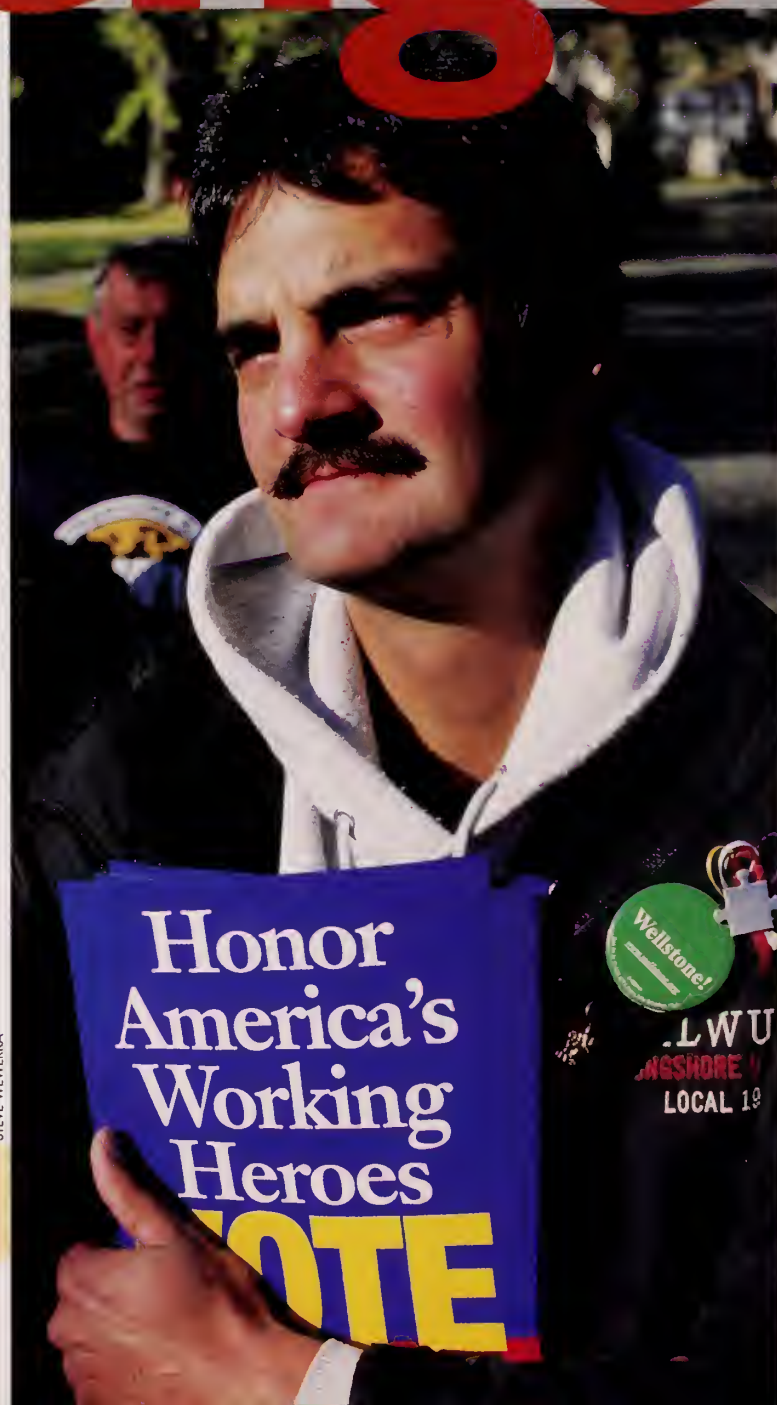
BY MIKE HALL

In the final weeks before Election Day Nov. 5, the nation's pharmaceutical industry dug into its multimillion dollar campaign treasure chest and deluged the airwaves on behalf of candidates who backed industry-friendly prescription drug legislation that, if passed, would do nothing to guarantee more affordable medications for seniors.

At the same time, some 32 West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union members hit the road to help mobilize working families in five states, even as their union struggled for a fair contract after the White House backed their employers in the dispute.

"Getting involved in politics makes a huge difference, because who gets elected can really have a big impact on your jobs and lives. Look how President Bush blocked our collective bargaining rights when he imposed a Taft-Hartley injunction on us. If it can happen to us, it can happen to you," Herald Ugles, an ILWU Local 19 member from Seattle, told a crowd of Minnesota union members.

People-powered politics: ILWU member Herald Ugles gets out the vote in Minnesota.



STEVE WEWERKA

The ILWU members in Minnesota were among thousands of union volunteers who worked to get out the vote for candidates who support working families' issues such as family supportive jobs, affordable prescription drugs, a strong Social Security program and quality education. Trena Smith capped her weeks-long Labor 2002 efforts by visiting 16 grocery stores in Little Rock Ark., to make sure her fellow Food and Commercial Workers Local 2008 members were charged up and informed about the issues, candidates and polling locations.

"Their concerns were affordable health care, benefits and wages and prescription drugs for seniors," Smith says. It was Senator-elect Mark Pryor's stand on those working-family issues that helped him defeat his Republican incumbent opponent.

Even as Smith reached out to union members across Arkansas, President Bush traveling on Air Force One, and Vice President Dick Cheney, aboard Air Force II, crisscrossed the country and combined "official" presidential business—trips paid for by taxpayers—with more campaign rallies and monumentally lucrative fundraisers than any previous president: 90 campaign stops and 70 fund raisers that netted \$200 million in the election cycle for Bush-backed candidates, according to the most recent Federal Election Commission data. In the final five days of the campaign, Bush hit 15 states in which his handpicked candidates faced tight races.

The 2002 off-year elections once again pitted legions of mobilized union volunteers against corporate front groups—like the innocuous sounding Americans for Job Security—and their hundreds of millions of dollars of television and radio advertising and campaign contributions to candidates who pledged to advance a corporate agenda.



JIM DEEGAN

Most expensive off-year election: AFSCME President Gerald McEntee says "corporate special interests are trying to drown out the voices of working families across the nation."



LEN KAMINSKY

Solidarity: As part of a two-day GOTV bus tour, Florida union activists joined a picket line with UNITE members at Point Blank, where workers make bullet-proof vests.

Since 1996, the union movement has mobilized working families in the election process by educating union members on issues through one-to-one contact at work-sites, labor-to-neighbor home visits, union volunteer-staffed phone banks and local union communications, turning out working family voters at an ever-growing rate.

But several factors had significant impact on this year's balloting, enabling Republicans to gain control of the U.S. Senate and widen their majority in the House of Representatives.

Massive amounts of corporate contributions this election year resulted in Big Business outspending working family unions by 12-to-1, spending \$720 million in comparison with the \$62 million unions spent on politics.

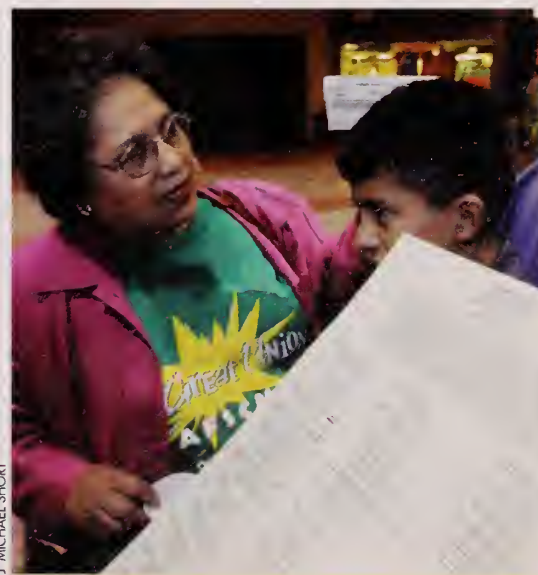
"This has been the most expensive off-year election in history," AFSCME President Gerald McEntee said following the election. "Corporate special interests are trying to drown out the voices of working families across the nation."

An election night survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the AFL-CIO showed that union voters—primarily because of Labor 2002's union member communication and mobilization—knew the election was about the economy, jobs and health care (see box, page 15).

But the message "constantly competed for attention with relentless war talk and the influence of a president who gained

support from the tragedy of Sept. 11 and beat the war drums," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said in a post-election news conference.

Despite the odds, Labor 2002's tens of thousands of union member volunteers and more than 4,000 local union coordinators made a difference by distributing 17 million worksite fliers, making 5 million phone calls, mailing 15 million pieces to union family voters and knocking on 500,000 doors.



J. MICHAEL SHORT

Reaching out: As part of many GOTV visits across the nation, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson joins union members in Texas, where she examines a sample ballot.



Energized: Through year-round political action, New Jersey union members got out the vote among working families, who sent Frank Lautenberg (D) to the U.S. Senate.

Working family support propels new governors to office

In four large industrial states, some of the hardest hit by the nation's economic recession—Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin—Labor 2002 activists propelled working family-friendly governors into offices formerly controlled by anti-worker Republicans.

In Illinois, working families put Rod Blagojevich in the Springfield governor's mansion, while union voters in Michigan played a big role in Jennifer Granholm's gubernatorial victory—making Granholm, a strong supporter of working family issues, Michigan's first female governor after 12 years of the stridently anti-worker administration of Gov. John Engler. Illinois and Michigan each lost some 70,000 manufacturing jobs in the past year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

During a two-month leave of absence from his MacKenzie High School classroom, Detroit AFT member and history teacher Charlie Robinson helped mobilize and recruit union volunteers for phone banks, precinct walks and other efforts that paid off in Granholm's victory and those of several candidates for county and local offices.

Volunteer recruitment can be difficult, with some people reluctant to get involved in a large, major campaign, says Robinson. One way to move people into taking the first step to political mobilization is to localize the action: "It's easier for me to get people involved in smaller, more local races—but the end-result is still a good union turnout that helps everybody on the ticket."

In Illinois, where the Teamsters played a part in electing Blagojevich, Local 700 President Pat Flynn says member-to-member contact energizes the union member volun-



Recognized: Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger thanks union volunteers in Kansas City, Mo., for their get-out-the-vote efforts.

teer—and his or her entire family. "When working families vote, we can make a difference. Our power at the polls is increased as spouses, sons, daughters and parents vote for our friends."

In Pennsylvania, working families rallied around Gov.-elect Ed Rendell, whose campaign platform focused on revitalizing the state's manufacturing job base and solving the critical crisis of retirees who have lost their health care because unfair trade policies have bankrupted their former companies.

Steelworkers President Leo Gerard calls Rendell's plan "a crucial, innovative and humane solution and a welcome change from business as usual"—and a major reason workers rallied to support Ren-

dell in Labor 2002's mobilization.

Rendell seeks to apportion the state's tobacco settlement to provide health care for retirees who have lost their coverage and create jobs not only through retraining, but by strengthening the state's manufacturing base.

Getting union members elected

PACE International Union Local 1-0037 member Mike Michaud won't be reporting to work at the Great Northern Paper Co. Mill in East Millinocket, Maine, for at least two years. His new job is in Washington D.C., as a member of the incoming 108th Congress. Union votes and support played a major role in his victory, says mill worker Bruce Roy, recording secretary of PACE Local 1-11.

"Mill town votes are what carried Mike in the primary and the general election. We mounted a huge GOTV effort," says Roy, a Labor 2002 coordinator. That effort produced results such as the 86.8 percent to 13.2 percent vote for Michaud in East Millinocket and similar results in other mill towns.

Michaud is one of two union members elected to Congress this year, joining Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.), an Electrical Workers member. Dozens of union members were elected to state legislatures, including 31 in New Jersey, and union members now form working-family majorities on the San Diego and San Jose city councils.

Electing union members to public office is one of the union movement's key political action strategies, beginning with the push to elect 2,000 union members in 2000. Now, with more than 2,000 union members in public office, the AFL-CIO Executive Council has set a goal of electing 5,000 union members as part of Target 5000.

The hundreds of union members elected in local, state and national elections this year are stepping into office after months of union members' plant visits and phone calls. Michaud's local union helped recruit more than 100 Labor 2002 volunteers in Maine, where a high point of the campaign and a major generator of volunteers was a statewide, two-day, 12-stop "No More Business

Bricklayers get-out-the-vote stickers and pamphlets supplemented the 17 million fliers distributed by union members.

Building a secure future for all our families-VOTE
Register to Vote!

What's at stake in the 2002 Election:

- Protecting Prevailing Wages and Economic Recovery
- New School Construction and Quality Education for
- Worker's Rights, Job Safety and Strong Unions
- Protecting Social Security and Medicare for working
- Affordable Prescription Drugs

Voter Registration Quick and Easy

How to register:

1. Visit the Government Relations web site <http://www.bacweb.org/govrelations/res>
2. Contact your Local Union office or Business A.
3. Look for voter registration materials at your Union.

Building a Secure Future for ALL Our Families
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers

distributed by union members.



KATHY SMITH

Connected: IBEW volunteers at the AFL-CIO phone bank helped make the 5 million calls union members made as part of Labor 2002.

As Usual" tour that focused on jobs.

Michaud and other union members hit mills, plants and other workplaces with the simple question, "Have any of you seen the jobs that the Republican candidates say free trade has created?"

"Most of them said, 'hell no!' It was a good way to get our message across to all union members," Roy says.

Elsewhere, more than 60 Fire Fighters won election battles across the nation in what IAFF President Harold Schaitberger calls a "a tremendous step forward for our strategy for electing Fire Fighters to office."

That strategy has helped put 264 union members into public office. The initiative is bolstered by the union's Political Training Academy that gives IAFF members four days of hands-on political training, campaign planning, fundraising and volunteer-recruitment techniques and get-out-the-vote tactics. More than 300 Fire Fighters have attended the academy since it opened in 1997.

In New Jersey, the 32 new union-member legislators brought to 216 the number of labor candidates in public office there since 1997.

New Jersey AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanecch says the growing activist army and New Jersey unions' implementation of the AFL-CIO's 10-step program for political success paid off after the working families-endorsed U.S. Senate candidate Robert Torricelli dropped out of the race 35 days before Election Day.

"We were able to refocus pretty quickly because we've been working our labor political plan for about five years and we plugged everything into mobilizing to get [Frank] Lautenberg elected," he says. After receiving unions' endorsement, Lautenberg turned a 20-point deficit into a nine-point win.

In other contests, Oregon Labor 2002 volunteers distributed more than 268,000

workplace fliers, made 283,000 phone calls to union members and knocked on 12,500 union doors. That effort not only helped elect a working family-friendly governor, but won passage of a ballot initiative to raise the state's minimum wage and one to clean up the initiative process that in recent elections has allowed anti-worker forces to manipulate the process with paycheck deception measures.

"Union voters voted with great consistency on the candidates and the ballot measures because they got reliable information from their unions," says Oregon AFL-CIO President Tim Nesbitt.

Determined to meet the challenge

On Oct. 25 campaigning in Minnesota came to a halt when the plane carrying Sen. Paul Wellstone, his wife Sheila, daughter Marcia and five others crashed in Eveleth, killing all aboard.

Wellstone's death, was a "devastating blow to all workers," says Lewie Newman, directing Business Agent for Machinists Local 163 in St. Cloud, Minn. "I worked with him on a number of issues, and he was always a champion. The best way to honor his memory is to work hard to elect people who share Paul's and our beliefs."

Wellstone had been widening his lead in the race, but an orchestrated campaign,

another visit from Bush and a last minute television ad blitz cost former Vice President Walter Mondale the victory. Mondale stood in for Wellstone and was forced to run a five-day campaign.

In most of the Senate races where Bush-backed candidates won, union membership was low. Yet even in those battleground states, the Hart survey shows union members backing Senate candidates endorsed by their unions 72 percent to 28 percent.

What's more, working families agree, 73 percent to 24 percent, that their unions need to invest time and money in politics and legislation, according to the Hart survey.

The tragic loss of Wellstone and his strong working family voice, and razor-thin Republican victories elsewhere, mean difficult times are ahead for working families. But union activists are vowing to carry on the fight more energized than ever.

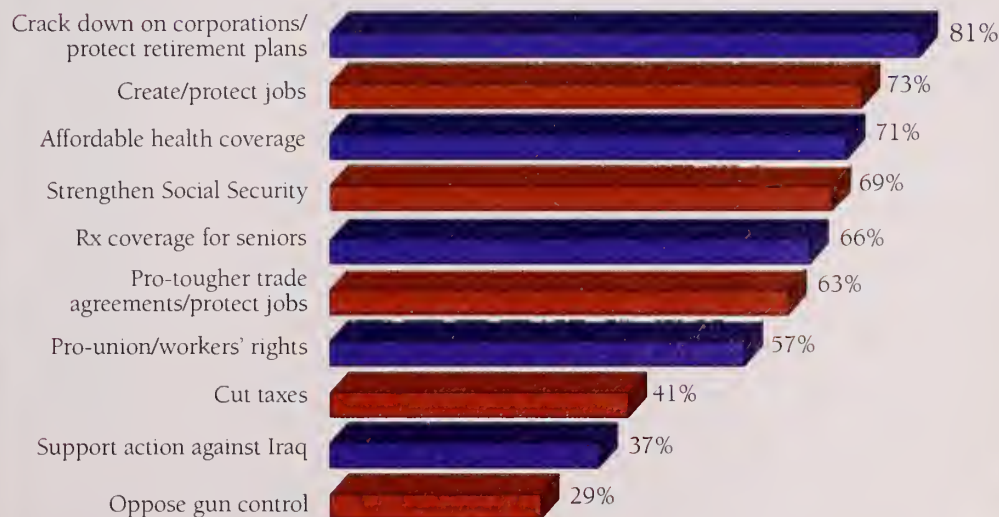
"We lost some tough ones, but one of the things that struck me was when we talked to union people about what's at stake—union rights, Social Security, all of our issues—not only did they understand, but they wanted to join in, they wanted to help," says Ugles.

"The next two years are going to be a real challenge, but working people are really determined to meet the challenge and get out to win in 2004." @



What Members Were Saying With Their Votes

Most important/very important goal in my House vote:



The 2002 Union Vote/Hart Research Associates for AFL-CIO

Strengthen Social Security: Alliance members rallying in New York City last year urged the Bush administration to strengthen, not gut, Social Security.

Senior Strength

In its first year, the Alliance for Retired Americans signed up 2.7 million members who are mobilizing for affordable prescription drugs and a strong Social Security system

BY JAMES B. PARKS

For Loraine Rubin, the September event at McPherson Square Park near the White House was all about seniors using their collective political power to influence decisions. A crowd of hundreds of seniors—all members of the Alliance for Retired Americans and many carrying signs saying “Drug Companies Make Me Sick”—rallied against the high cost of prescription drugs.

The action culminated the Alliance’s first national meeting in Washington, D.C. Nearly 1,000 members—about half of whom were new activists—marched, rallied, lobbied and planned strategies to advance a legislative agenda that includes affordable prescription medication and strengthening Social Security.

UNITE President Bruce Raynor, United Food and Commercial Workers President Doug Dority and AFGE President Bobby Harnage Sr., along with Alliance Secretary-Treasurer Ruben Burks and Executive Director Edward Coyle, led the crowd to the headquarters of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhARMA), the industry’s lobbyist, to protest high prescription drug prices.

“The Alliance has a great potential to change the way seniors are treated through political activism,” says Rubin, a retired AFT member from Massapequa, N.Y. “It’s outrageous that people have to choose between food and prescription drugs and that our government allows such conditions. We’re supposed to be the richest country in the world. Congress and the White House are encouraging the inequality of those who need the most help. We can stop that. We are angry, and we vote.”



Affordable drugs: Seniors rallied for affordable prescription medication in Washington, D.C., as part of the Alliance for Retired Americans’ first convention.

The national meeting and march, which included speeches by members of Congress, underscored the political activism of seniors and the influence they are wielding through the Alliance.

With a record number of U.S. workers—many of them union members—nearing or in retirement, the union movement is addressing issues that matter to older Americans and bringing more retirees into the fight for working family issues.

Older Americans make up nearly 13 percent of the nation's population, with 34.3 million people age 65 and older, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In the early decades of the 21st century that number is expected to burgeon to about 70 million, representing 20 percent of the overall population. The increase will occur as members of the Baby Boom generation—workers born between 1946 and 1964—retire. By 2005, nearly 40 percent of the workforce will be older than 45.

In May 2001, the AFL-CIO and community activists launched the Alliance for Retired Americans to mobilize the talents of retired union members. This year, 2.7 million members make up the Alliance.

"Retired workers are one of the strongest voting blocks in this nation," says AFT Secretary-Treasurer Edward McElroy Jr. "The Alliance provides us with a powerful mechanism to reach out to our natural allies."

Reaching out to the community

The Alliance set out to organize and charter 20 state chapters in its first year. In a series of regional meetings with union members and community groups, Alliance staff explained the organization's goals and trained activists in building strong local chapters. By January 2003, between 18 and 20 state chapters will be chartered, with 15 to 18 more in the process of becoming chartered, says Coyle.

Fueling the Alliance's growth is its outreach to new leadership among seniors: Nearly 15 percent of the participants in the September national meeting came from community-based groups, Coyle says. "Our coalitions are much stronger and better when we have community groups actively involved," he adds. The Alliance set aside six seats on its national executive council for community activists and

Voice for retirees: Launched in May 2001 with a Social Security action on Capitol Hill, the Alliance for Retired Americans now has 2.7 million members.



requires state chapters to include them on their boards as well.

Another Alliance priority: finding the most effective way to communicate with millions of members. The Alliance issues weekly e-mail alerts to members on issues facing seniors and publishes in-depth quarterly reports. Recent reports have covered subjects such as conditions in the nation's nursing homes and the need for better Medicare benefits.

The Alliance also produces a scorecard showing how members of Congress voted on legislation important to seniors.

Focus on issues

The Alliance focuses the potent political power of seniors to mobilize around key issues, such as the need for a guaranteed Medicare prescription drug benefit, says George Kourpias, Alliance president and president emeritus of the Machinists.

"All of us are affected by the high costs of prescriptions," Kourpias says. "We want to make sure our grandparents, our mothers and fathers are able to get the medicines they need."

Seniors are unified in the need for an affordable prescription drug benefit



Taking it to the street: Alliance members march outside the headquarters of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, the industry lobbyist, to demand lower prescription drug prices.

through Medicare—and they have the political power to keep the issue in the forefront of debate. A 2002 survey for the Alliance by Peter D. Hart Research Associates shows that, on average, seniors account for some 28 percent of all voters in off-year elections. Nearly nine in 10 respondents (87 percent) say they would be more likely to vote for candidates who back an affordable prescription drug benefit. Nearly one-third of older Americans—about 11 million—do not have prescription coverage some time during the course of a year, the Alliance reports.

The Alliance demonstrated seniors' determination to gain a real prescription drug plan by coordinating hundreds of seniors who filled 16 buses traveling to Canada in May and June as part of the Alliance's Rx Express. In Canada, they bought prescription drugs at a fraction of their U.S. cost—

and saved more than \$500,000 in annualized medication costs, according to the Alliance.

About one in four (28 percent) Medicare beneficiaries receives prescription drug coverage from an employer, and the cost for retirees is going up, according to the 2002 Annual Employer Health Benefits survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Education Trust, both nonprofit research organizations. Some 17 percent of firms with at least 200 employees have increased the amount retirees pay for prescription drugs in the past two years, while 9 percent eliminated retiree health benefits altogether for new hires or existing workers, according to the survey. Another 31 percent say they are likely to increase retirees' portion of cost sharing for prescription drugs in the next two years.

The price of prescription drugs already

is too high for many seniors. Dorothy Brooks of Pittsburgh, who suffers from diabetes and arthritis, and her disabled husband have a combined monthly income of \$1,283. After they pay their bills, but before they buy their groceries, they are left with about \$300 a month. Yet prescriptions cost the Brooks more than \$350 a month.

"You try to make the medicine stretch, make a one-month supply into three by taking just one pill a day instead of three," she told a congressional committee in May when she and 500 other Alliance members lobbied Capitol Hill lawmakers for a real Medicare prescription drug benefit, not the phony benefit preferred by the White House and congressional Republicans.

The Democrats' 2002 proposal provides prescription drug benefits under Medicare, covers the drugs seniors need and controls the costs of premiums and co-pays. The Republican bill would privatize prescription drug benefits and force seniors to pay all costs between \$2,000 and \$3,600 out of their own pockets. It also allows insurance companies and HMOs to decide whether to offer drug coverage in a given area, what drugs to cover and how much beneficiaries would have to pay.

While on Capitol Hill in May and again in September, the retirees sent a message that they would hold elected officials accountable on the issue. "The Alliance is a force to be reckoned with," says Arlen Banks, an Alliance member and retired UAW member from Los Angeles. "Seniors are coming together to change the way our representatives do business. We want them to respond to our needs, and we will hold them accountable."

Although Congress adjourned in October without acting on a prescription drug benefit, the Alliance intends to push the issue to the forefront next year just as it did during the November elections, Kourpias says. "We are here to stay, and we won't stop," he says.

Grassroots political action

In an effort to educate communities on senior issues such as Social Security and health care, the Alliance organized Truth Squads to travel around in various states before the November elections. The squads operated in Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri,



GOTV: At a Washington, D.C., rally, Alliance for Retired Americans President George Kourpias urges members to use their political strength.

Nevada, New Hampshire, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

The Truth Squads were part of a national grassroots effort by the Alliance to mobilize seniors and retirees to vote and advance worker-friendly and senior-friendly agendas at the local, state and federal levels.

The Alliance focused much of its grassroots political activity in six states—Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire and South Dakota—each with important elections where the number of senior voters could provide the difference, Coyle says. Staff members volunteered to travel to the states to organize and mobilize seniors—resulting in thousands of seniors taking part in union get-out-the-vote efforts.

The GOTV efforts built on the large base of members in each state, such as the 150,000 Alliance members in Florida, 71,000 members in Missouri and 6,000 in New Hampshire. Alliance grassroots volunteers sent out mailings and staffed phone banks while Alliance leadership traveled extensively to events in several states to mobilize seniors, particularly in Florida and New Hampshire, Coyle says.

Members in other states also were actively involved—seniors such as Jack Tugwell, 83, a retired Electrical Workers member in Albuquerque, N.M., who participated in precinct walks.

“Labor’s always been involved in politics, and it seems like we’re a lot more involved this year than ever before

because people are interested in the issues. They’re worried about what will happen if the wrong people get elected.”

Cylister Williams, a retired UAW member, coordinated the A. Philip Randolph Institute’s nonpartisan get-out-the-vote effort in Louisville, Ky., because “seniors who have worked all their lives deserve better than what we are getting,” he says. “We shouldn’t have to be worried about whether we will be able to live out our retirement in comfort or be able to afford to get medicines if we are sick.”

State-level action

Seniors are building coalitions to gain prescription drug benefits at the state level as well, says John Carr, president of the Maine Alliance and a retired member of the Electrical Workers. Through the efforts of the state’s unions, seniors and consumer groups, Maine was the first state to pass a prescription drug cost control law. The AFL-CIO developed model legislation based on the Maine law for other states battling for affordable prescription drugs for their uninsured citizens. PhRMA has gone to court to fight Maine’s law and the Bush administration filed a brief in support of PhRMA’s suit, which is now before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Protecting Social Security is another key issue for Alliance members who strongly

oppose Bush administration plans to privatize portions of the program. Following up on its Social Security mobilization efforts begun in 2001, the Alliance launched a pledge drive that continued through the 2002 election by mobilizing hundreds of seniors in three dozen cities during the July 4 congressional recess to urge elected officials to sign a pledge rejecting Social Security privatization.

“Recent scandals such as the Enron Corp. fiasco that cost thousands of employees their pensions and retirement savings are good examples of why Social Security—the nation’s dependable retirement fund—should not be tampered with,” says Roberta Saxton, an Alliance member from Suitland, Md., who was one of hundreds of Alliance members who lobbied lawmakers against privatization in May.

Social Security keeps millions of seniors out of poverty, Kourpias says. “But there are people in the Congress and the Bush administration who want to sacrifice it on the altar of Wall Street. We can’t fall asleep on this issue.”

Seniors have unique talents

The Alliance has grown because retirees bring a unique set of talents to political activism—and the Alliance creates a place for people who care about seniors’ issues to speak out and take action, Kourpias says.

Seniors, especially retirees, have the time to research an issue, lobby public officials and educate other members, Kourpias says. Many are former union leaders and have skills needed to organize and mobilize large groups of people, he says. And they have a wealth of contacts in the community as members of senior citizens groups and congregations. “They have experience and maturity,” he says. “Our members are political activists who remain active even after they retire.”

Alliance members are unified on key issues and are focused on the goals they have set, Coyle says. “Our members are hungry for an advocacy group. They want to extend their union activities beyond retirement, and the Alliance gives them the vehicle to do that while also doing something for the good of people of all ages.”

For more information on the Alliance for Retired Americans, visit www.retiredamericans.org. @



JAY MALLIN

Strong support: UNITE President Bruce Raynor and other union presidents joined Alliance members at a Washington, D.C., rally in September.

America@work

Holiday Shopping Guide

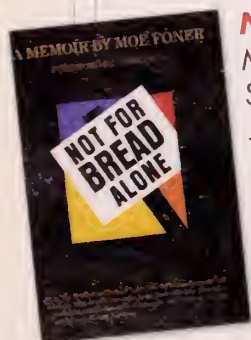
Searching for the perfect union-made gift? The **America@work** Holiday Shopping Guide makes the seasonal shopping shuffle as fast and easy as clicking to a website or dialing a toll-free number.

Nonfiction

Books



A Perfect World, by Debra Trione. The author asked 50 prominent people, including AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, to name two things they hope will be true about the world in 50 years and to paint a picture of their ideal world. This book is the fascinating result. **\$16.95**. Andrews McMeel Publishing.



Not for Bread Alone, by Moe Foner. Foner, a leader of SEIU District 1199 who died in January, fought for many years to improve the lives of thousands of hospital workers. In his memoir, Foner describes his production of a musical about hospital workers—the seeds of 1199's Bread and Roses cultural program. **\$25**. Cornell University Press.

By These Hands: Portraits from the Factory Floor,

By These Hands



photographs by David Parker, depicts the richness of industrial labor in plants throughout Minnesota. Parker, a longtime chronicler of working conditions in the United States and abroad, documents the common bonds of working men and women through timeless black-and-white photographs. **\$24.95**. Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Labor's Text: The Worker in American Fiction, by Laura Hapke. Hapke takes a close look at how American literature has depicted working people in the past 200 years—from artisans and weavers in the 1800s and union organizers in the early 20th century to everyday working people in today's offices and factories. **\$30**. Rutgers University Press.

Left Out: The Politics of Exclusion, by Martin Duberman. This collection of essays by the famous activist and historian covers nearly 30 years and includes economic justice, the Vietnam War, the struggle for civil rights, gay liberation and feminism. **\$22**. South End Press.

Children's books

Bud, Not Buddy, by former UAW member Christopher Curtis, follows 10-year-old Bud Caldwell as he escapes a cruel foster home during the depression in search of his father. The boy joins forces with Lefty Lewis, a Pullman porter and former Negro League baseball pitcher. The book won the Newbery Medal, the most important prize for children's books, and the Coretta Scott King Author Award. **\$16.95**. Delacorte Press.

Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights, by Judith Pinkerton Josephson. The biography of a brave woman with a demure appearance and a fierce personality who fought against corporations and powerful politicians for a better life for rail workers, miners, women and children. **\$25.26**. Lerner Publications.



¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can! by Diana Cohn. This richly illustrated book tells the story of Carlitos, whose mother is a janitor in a downtown Los Angeles skyscraper. When his mother joins other janitors on strike, Carlitos takes part in the march with a special sign for his mom. **\$15**. Cinco Puntos Press.

Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories, by S. Beth Atkin. Nine children in Latino migrant farm worker families talk about their family lives, friends, work in the fields and the language barriers at school. **\$18.95.** Little Brown & Company.

Working Cotton, by Sherley Anne Williams. The award-winning story of Shelan, a young African American girl who works long days in the cotton fields with others in her family. **\$16.** Harcourt.

Fiction

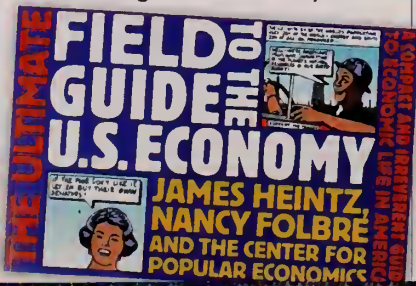
Emma, by Howard Zinn. Just in time for the holidays, long-time labor chronicler and Boston University historian Zinn published a new, two-act play about the anarchist, feminist, free-spirited thinker and union organizer Emma Goldman. **\$9.** South End Press.

Germinal, by Emile Zola. This classic 19th century epic story, often considered Zola's masterpiece, describes the inhuman conditions endured by northern French miners in the 1860s and their struggle for a better life. Various hardback and paperback editions available. **\$7.95.** Oxford University Press.

The Heat: Steelworker Lives and Legends.

In this collection of 15 stories and poems, steelworkers from Gary, Ind., and Baltimore write about their disappointments, heroism, physical pain and solidarity with other steelworkers. **\$15.** Cedar Hill Publications.

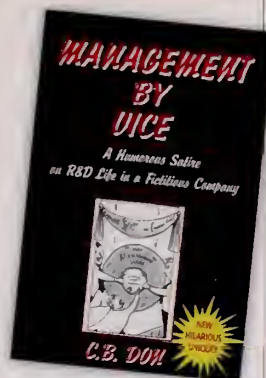
The Ultimate Field Guide to the U.S. Economy. The great economist John Kenneth Galbraith calls this "the best and least solemn guide to the dismal science you are likely soon to encounter." With sections such as "Who Owns How Much?" and "Bye-Bye Factor Jobs," this humorously illustrated book gives you all the information you need about owners, workers, unions, the global economy and more. **\$16.95.** New Press.



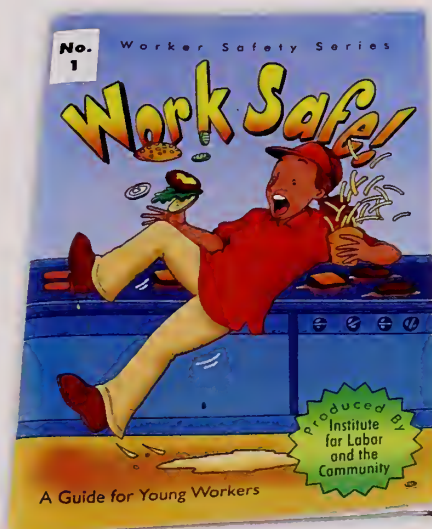
Humor

Management by Vice, by C.B. Don.

A witty series of lampoons of managers in a fictitious high-tech firm who bungle the projects of their R&D staff. Employees from all work environments can relate. **\$19.95.** Sterling Ter Libra.



Working Class Hero: Huck/Konopacki Labor Cartoons, Volume 4, by Gary Huck and Mike Konopacki. This is the latest collection of the best work of two Wisconsin cartoonists whose cartoons have appeared in union publications nationwide. **\$15.** Charles H. Kerr.



Work Safe! This is one of the best gifts for older children who are working or planning to work. With comics and flashy graphics, it describes dangers young people may face on the job—from hot liquids in restaurant kitchens to heavy equipment and power tools. **Work Safe!** also details ways they can avoid workplace dangers and lists their basic health and safety rights at work. **\$10.** Institute for Labor & the Community.

If you can't find a book

mentioned in this guide at the AFL-CIO The Union Shop, the next best place to look is Powell's Bookstore in Portland, Ore., where workers have a voice at work through International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 5. By ordering books through Local 5's website, 10 percent of the purchase price goes directly to employees. Visit www.ilwulocal5.com and click on the "books" link on the Powell's banner. Also order by phone at 800-878-7323, extension 321.

The Union Shop

for Union Members
Nationwide

This fall, the union movement's union shop opened at the AFL-CIO building in Washington, D.C. With an array of union products, including books, T-shirts, CDs and videos, the store is a great resource for those visiting the area. Through toll-free and online ordering, The Union Shop also is a year-round resource for union members nationwide.

If you're in the Washington, D.C., area, be sure to visit The Union Shop, open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., at 815 16th Street, N.W.

If you can't make it to Washington, D.C., you can buy gifts from The Union Shop by calling 800-442-5645, sending an e-mail to kpender@afcio.org or faxing your order to 202-637-5058. Please note reference code AA11027 and cite product number on your order. Shipping costs (UPS charges) will be added. Please specify regular delivery or overnight delivery (additional cost).

T-shirts

(available in sizes small through 3XL)

"Street Heat" T-shirt. \$10.

#S308.000 Small
#S308.000 Medium
#S308.000 Large

"An Owie to One Is an Owie to All" T-shirt for kids. \$10.

#NC02200 2YS
#NC02200 2YM
#NC02200 2YL

Pride At Work

"Out and Organizing" T-shirt. \$12.

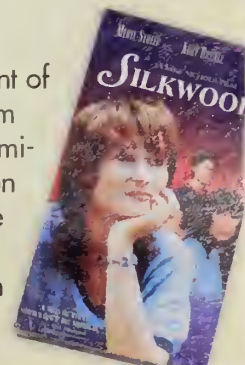
#PW022003 Small
#PW022003 Large
#PW022003 XL



Videos

"Chicken Run." The story of chickens on evil Mrs. Tweedy's farm who dream of a better life. **\$20.** #NC027001

"Silkwood." A true account of Karen Silkwood, the plutonium plant employee and Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union member who blew the whistle on the company's worker safety violations—and died in a mysterious car accident. **\$20.** #NC027006

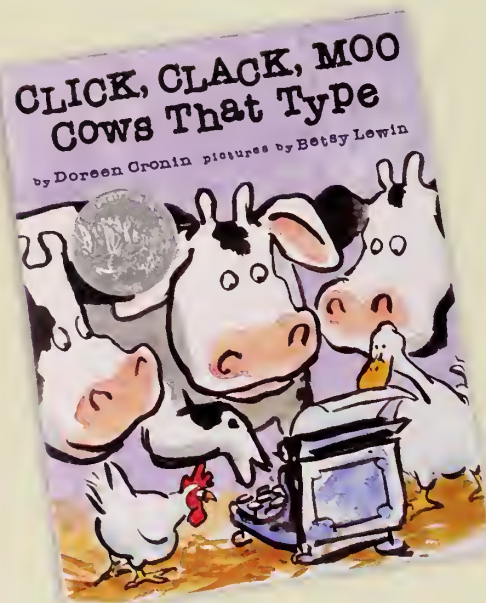


TheUnionShop

for Union Members
Nationwide

Books

America Needs a Raise: Fighting for Economic Security and Social Justice, by John J. Sweeney. AFL-CIO President Sweeney gives an account of the problems that American working families face, such as the disappearance of well-paying jobs and the growing gap between rich and poor, and details how working people can win economic and social justice by organizing in their workplaces and communities. **\$18.95.** Houghton Mifflin. #S001.0000

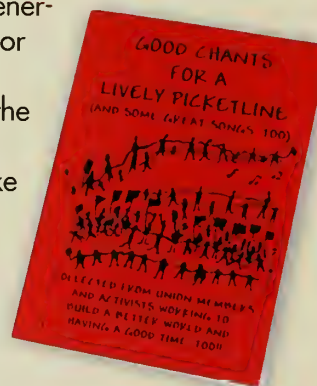


Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type, by Doreen Cronin. This children's book begins when cows write a note to Farmer Brown informing him the barn is cold at night and they need electric blankets. Shortly, the barnyard animals organize and strike. A how-to guide for future union activists. **\$15.95.** Simon & Schuster. #NC021004

No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers, edited by Andrew Ross. Many consumers don't realize the T-shirts and running shoes they're wearing may have been produced by 13-year-old children working 14-hour days for 30 cents per hour. This book tells the real story—and shows how you can join the growing global campaign to shut down sweatshops. **\$20.** Verso. #NC021009

A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait, by Jervis Anderson. The biography of the young African American radical and street orator in Harlem details his rise to become the founder and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a leader of the civil rights movement. **\$19.95.** University of California Press. #NC021013

Good Chants for a Lively Picket-line (and Some Great Songs, Too), by Ruth Goldbaum. Need a chant to energize a picket line or rally? This is your source. They run the gamut from all-purpose chants like "Hey, hey, what should we do? Organize our whole damn crew!" to the more specific "Hygienists and school nurses all need money in their purses." **\$1.** Labor Heritage Foundation. #NC021027



CDs

"This Land Is Your Land," Woody and Arlo Guthrie. A collection of Woody's classic songs. **\$15.** #NC028014

"Working Class," Pam Parker & Co. Love songs, ballads and political songs ranging from "Folsom Prison Blues" to "Since I Fell for You." **\$15.** #NC028016



"Live Solo Bootleg," Billy Bragg. A live album recorded in Australia with the famed British folk rock singer and champion of working people. **\$12.** #NC028022

Golf Balls

Spalding Top Flite XL golf balls with an AFL-CIO imprint. **\$24** for a box of 12. #NC024002



Union Pride

"Got a Boss? Get a Union" mug. **\$6.** #NC024005

AFL-CIO cap (navy blue). **\$15.** #NC022004



AFL-CIO fleece jacket. **\$40.**
#NC022005 S #NC022005 XL
#NC022005 M #NC022005 XXL
#NC022005 L

Pins

"A Woman's Place Is in Her Union" pin. **\$1.** #NC026001

"No Human Being Is Illegal!" pin. **\$1.** #NC026006



America @work

Holiday Shopping Guide

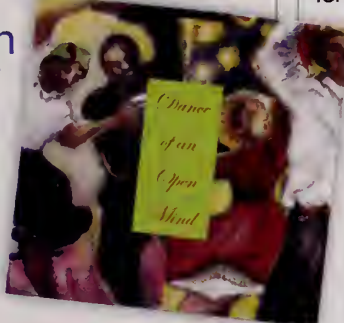
More Union-Made Sources

Union Hotels

A weekend in a special place is a great gift—and the **Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Union Hotel Guide** offers a variety of union hotels in all price ranges, including Bally's Atlantic City and San Francisco's Cathedral Hill Hotel. Find the guide online at www.hereunion.org/hotelguide or call the union at 202-393-4373 for a print copy.

"Dance of an Open Mind" Calendar

Give your friends and family an inspirational start to the New Year with the 2003 **"Dance of an Open Mind"** Social Justice Calendar, from Bread and Roses (\$12.95). The calendar includes quotes from union leader John L. Lewis, author Toni Morrison and Islam founder Mohammed. As the nonprofit cultural project of SEIU District 1199, the National Health and Human Services Employees Union, Bread and Roses also sells posters, social justice notecards and videos. Visit the website at www.bread-and-roses.com or call 800-666-1728.



"Bread and Roses" Video

Good movies make good stocking stuffers, and a sure winner is the award-winning **"Bread and Roses."**

Based on the Justice for Janitors campaign in Los

Angeles, "Bread and Roses" weaves a love story with a thrilling organizing effort. \$80 on VHS or \$25 on DVD from the Labor Heritage Foundation, which has brought a wealth of working people's culture—photo exhibits, music festivals and more—to the union movement for 23 years. The current catalog is available online at www.laborheritage.org or by calling 202-974-8040.

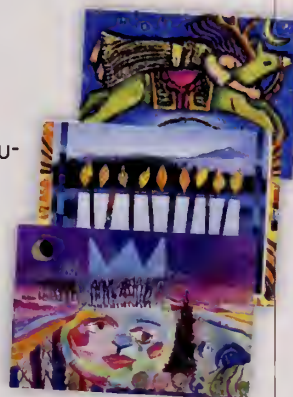


Union-Made Clothes

Find union-made clothes under the SweatX label at the Botto House in New Jersey. SweatX, an employee-owned cutting and sewing factory in Los Angeles where the workers are members of UNITE Local 44, offers shirts, caps and more. Botto House, now a national landmark and headquarters of the American Labor Museum, once was home to immigrant silk mill workers who lent it as a meeting place for strikers. The Botto House Museum also sells books, such as *César Chávez: Labor Leader* for young readers, and other items. Request a copy of the store inventory by calling 973-595-7953.

Holiday Gift Cards

For unique and beautiful holiday cards, there's no better source than Syracuse Cultural Workers. Among this year's large stock of cards are a Marc Chagall-like **"Reindeer Dream"** Christmas card, a Hanukkah card with a modern image of a menorah and a secular **"Circle Dance"** card—all printed by members of Graphic Communications International Union. The SCW has championed unions and other social movements for 20 years. Also available: a 2003 peace calendar, women artists' datebook and a catalog with dozens more items. Order online at www.syraculturalworkers.org or calling 315-474-1132.



Harley-Davidson

Ever since 21-year-old William Harley and 20-year-old Arthur Davidson began selling motorcycles a century ago, Harley-Davidsons have become the most coveted heavyweight cruisers in the world. If this is the year for a special gift, consider one of the 100th Anniversary motorcycles in any of the XL, Big Twin or VRSC families—all made by the women and men in Machinists Local Lodge

78 and PACE Local 7-209. To find a Harley-Davidson dealer near you, visit www.harley-davidson.com or call 800-443-2153.

See's Old-Time Candies

For years, just about the only way to get **See's Candies** was by visiting its shops along the West Coast and in Hawaii. Now these tasty treats, made by members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers, are available nationwide by going online at www.sees.com or calling 800-347-7337.



Union Member Guides

If someone you care about has just joined a union—or even if they have been an active union member for 40 years—**The Union Member's Complete Guide** is a perfect gift. The guide details union members' rights and responsibilities, negotiating contracts, the steps in filing a grievance and much more. Available from Union Communication Services at www.unionist.com or at 800-321-2545. The UCS catalog includes good resources on the union movement and readable treats.

"Organize" Poster

If one image captures what unions are all about, it's the Northland Poster Collective's famous **"Organize"** poster depicting many little fish taking on a big fish. Order the poster for \$12.95 by going online at www.northlandposter.com or calling 800-627-3082. The socially progressive nonprofit also sells many other items, including T-shirts that say "Unions: The Anti-Theft Device for Working People."

Radio Flyer Wagon

Put a smile on the face of your favorite small child with a **Radio Flyer No. 9 Kid-Sized Red Wagon** from Radio Flyer. The members of UAW Local 1066 who work for Radio Flyer make a variety of safe wagons—from miniature toys to heavy-duty wagons sturdy enough for farm use. See the No. 9 wagon, as well as trikes, bikes and scooters, at www.redwagons.com or by requesting a catalog at 877-739-2466.



DON'T MOURN about politics. **Organize** to build people power.

If you ever questioned why organizing must be the union movement's top priority, the answer became clear Nov. 5.

We know how to mobilize, energize and inspire union household voters—but we need MORE of us and that means we need to organize.

And with anti-worker, anti-union, corporate agenda pushers in charge of every branch of government, working people need union membership more than ever.

Make organizing your No. 1 priority for 2003. It will make a difference in 2004.



NATIONAL ORGANIZING SUMMIT

Recognizing that nothing is more important for working families than building union strength through organizing, the AFL-CIO is holding a first-ever National Organizing Summit.

Top organizers across affiliate lines will meet Jan. 10-11 in Washington, D.C., to talk about their roles in overcoming obstacles to organizing. The event will kick off an expanded effort to increase the pace and scale of organizing.

For more information, call your union's national organizing director.

